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ABSTRACT

The application of the idea of diplomacy to educational change is addressed, with attention to the problems faced by the head of a teaching and learning support group within a university, along with the role of educational advisers, or consultants, The analysis is structured based on the main elements of diplomacy. Attention is directed to an incident in which an adviser was treated undiplomatically by representatives of the host culture; the problems faced by the adviser; strategies open to the adviser and the relationship between policy and strategy; the idea of culture as applied to educational institutions and disciplinary groups; and the way that differing perspectives on education and educational development might be formed and the way they affect the way in which individuals or groups regard change and promote change. A number of cases in which attempts have been made by advisory groups to influence the educational practices of various host cultures are examined, and some of the problems that have arisen when the bridges have not been properly constructed are identified. The possibilities of the constructive use of diplomacy and the strategy adopted by an adviser within one institution are explained. The case studies include instructional television in Sweden, and the following United Kingdom examples: the Schools Council/Nuffield Humanities project, the Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education, the Colleges of Education Learning Programme, the Higher Education Learning project (Physics), and the diplomatic approach used at the University of Sussex. Additional uses for diplomacy, particularly its role within the severe financial constraints in education, are considered. A bibliography is appended. (SW)

ED217762

Eric Hewton

# Rethinking Educational Change

## A case for diplomacy

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CONTENTS


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | |
| | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1 | THE UNWANTED OUTSIDER | 4 |
| 2 | OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS | 12 |
| 3 | STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE | 22 |
| 4 | INSIDE KNOWLEDGE | 30 |
| 5 | PERSPECTIVES AND PARADIGMS | 45 |
| 6 | OUTSIDE INTERVENTION | 65 |
| 7 | A CASE FOR DIPLOMACY | 79 |
| 8 | DIPLOMACY AND RADICAL CHANGE | 93 |
| | REFERENCES | 103 |
| | INDEX | 109 |

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# INTRODUCTION

This monograph is about educational change, and particularly about the part played by those with responsibility for inititating or supporting change: educational advisers or consultants, curriculum development specialists, staff development officers and the like. The process of change is looked at from their point of view, especially with regard to their difficulties and to the possibilities open to them. The problems faced by a chairman of a teaching and learning support group within a university are the subject of the earlier chapters but thereafter the focus is widened to include educational advisers generally, whatever their institution. The context of the study is primarily, although not exclusively, higher and further education but the issues and ideas which are discussed are applicable to all sectors of education.

The literature on educational change is considerable and is often referred to but the application of the idea of diplomacy to educational change is new and provides a unifying structure for the discussion, bringing together aspects of organizational sociology, social anthropology, innovation theory, management science and curriculum development theory. The link between diplomacy and educational change depends upon similarities in the role of foreign diplomat and educational adviser. Both operate in accordance with some kind of brief and both are ultimately accountable to those who appoint them. Although neither is entirely a free agent both are usually empowered to operate with considerable autonomy.

Both seek to influence others: in the case of the diplomat it is usually the government of a foreign state whereas for the adviser it is generally an educational institution, an academic department or a group of teachers or lecturers. They each have discretion to negotiate and, to a large extent, to choose the strategies they will use in their work. In this connection there are certain rules and protocol which it is incumbent upon the diplomat to observe and any breach may lead to undesired consequences (as illustrated by the example at the start of Chapter 1). The protocol of educational diplomacy is less developed and in this respect the adviser has much to learn from the diplomat.

Both the diplomat and the adviser act as a bridge between a set of policies, goals or ideas on one side and, on the other side, a 'host culture' which it is hoped to influence in some way. There are of course some differences in what they may hope to achieve. In diplomacy, an ambassador may be required to pursue policies which are against the interests of the host state although this fact may be disguised in order to improve a negotiating

position. In the diplomacy of educational change, however, policy intention will generally be regarded by the advisers as being in the best interests of the host culture. But even here the difference is, to some extent, a matter of interpretation and there have been, as some of the examples in Chapter 7 illustrate, many well intended but quite misguided attempts to 'improve' the working practices of host cultures.

It is perhaps inevitable that the author should link the two ideas — diplomacy and educational change. A career involving a long period as a loss adjuster followed by several years in the dual role of lecturer and adviser provided the kind of experiences in which the art of diplomacy was a necessary tool for survival.

In loss adjusting the adjuster acts as an arbitrator between an insured person and an insurance company. The claim has to be settled both fairly and smoothly — criteria which are not necessarily compatible. In order to achieve a settlement which is satisfactory to both parties the adjuster requires a detailed knowledge of insurance law and protocol, an understanding of the particular attitude to claims settlements adopted by each insurance company and a shrewd knowledge of the psychology and sociology of insurance claim-making.

The second experience incorporating the role of lecturer (for 50 per cent of the time) and educational adviser (for the remainder) was one that might have been specifically designed to test all the capacities of an aspiring diplomat. The ideas and intended actions stemming from the performance of one role (that of adviser) were continually being challenged from the perspective of the other (that of the lecturer). The role was, in effect, 'schizophrenic'. What could or should be done to improve courses, teaching and learning could often be identified from the standpoint of the adviser but the reasons why these ideas could not, or should not, be implemented or even proposed could just as easily be recognized from the lecturers' standpoint. As a lecturer the feeling was always very strong that 'I must solve my own problems, I am the only one who knows the situation well enough to find solutions. That I do not do so fully or perfectly is more a matter of time constraints than lack of will or knowledge. I could do with an extra pair of hands rather than somebody who would tell me what to do.' The clients' and the advisers' problems were, throughout the experience, apparent from both sides. The bridges between the advisers' position and those of members of the host culture could be tested in the mind before ever being expressed. The adviser in these circumstances had no option other than to be a diplomat — he was part of both cultures.

The book takes its structure from the main elements of diplomacy. Chapter 1 looks at an incident — one which, to use diplomatic language, caused a 'flurry of activity', 'an exchange of notes', 'a recall for further briefing'. The adviser, in this instance, was treated rather undiplomatically by representatives of the host culture.

In Chapter 2, the incident is analysed and the problems which the

adviser faced are identified and explored. Chapter 3 looks at the various strategies open to the adviser and at the relationship between policy and strategy.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the idea of culture as applied to educational institutions and disciplinary groups while Chapter 5 goes on to analyse not only how differing perspectives on education and educational development might be formed but also how they affect the way in which individuals or groups regard change and seek to bring it about.

Chapter 6 examines a number of cases in which attempts have been made by advisory groups to influence the educational practices of various host cultures and identifies some of the problems which have arisen when the bridges have not been properly constructed. Chapter 7 then explores the possibilities of the constructive use of diplomacy and explains the strategy adopted by an adviser within one institution.

Chapter 8 draws some conclusions, and suggests further uses for diplomacy, particularly its role within the severe financial constraints recently imposed on education.

It might be asserted that the suggestions made here will lead only to limited change and will not bring about the radical changes which some might see as desirable and necessary. This point is taken up in Chapter 8 and leads to the conclusion that in rethinking educational change there is always a strong case for diplomacy.

# 1

# THE UNWANTED OUTSIDER

Nicolson (1956) explains the term 'persona non grata' as follows:

> 'When an ambassador or other envoy becomes intolerably obnoxious to the government to which he is accredited, it is said that has ceased to be a "persona grata". This amounts to a request for his recall. Thus Bulwer, who had ventured to give advice to the Spanish Government regarding their internal politics was asked by Sotomayor "to anticipate as much as possible the leave of absence he was contemplating".'

In the next few pages an incident occurring within an educational institution, which has much in common with the diplomatic faux pas referred to above, is described. The ambassador in this case is cast in the role of an educational adviser in a university and is required by his brief to give advice to colleagues regarding ways in which they might improve their courses and the effectiveness of their teaching. The exchange of letters makes it clear that the colleagues concerned regard the 'obnoxious' overtures made by him as a gross infringement of their internal affairs and in effect encourage him to take his leave as soon as possible.

The scene is set in a university but it might have taken place in any sector of education in which individuals or groups described as 'outsiders' attempt to influence the attitudes or working practices of others — called here 'insiders'. It might have involved those working in the same organization — as in the following example — or those within an educational institution encountering outsiders attached to a nationally organized educational development project or advisory service. Whatever the situation, it seems that, too often, the encounter embodies two negative ingredients — misunderstanding and mistrust. The reasons for this and the possible remedies provide the focus for the rest of this book.

## AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES

The following correspondence takes place through the medium of an internal newsletter in a university in 1979. It is a hypothetical confrontation occurring shortly before an important (senate) meeting. Although the letters are imaginary most of the arguments are based upon statements made at one time or another in connection with attempts to bring about educational change in universities or polytechnics.

To a large extent the opposing views have been polarized to emphasize the distance between outsider and insider: each letter, respectively, represents a coalescence of arguments for and against outsider involvement

in the affairs of insiders. To some readers, the outsider may appear naïve but such readers can be assured that similar statements can be found in committee and other documents which were circulated within many institutions in higher education in the 1970s. The lecturer-insider, on the other hand, may appear, to some, to be far too self-righteous, knowledgeable and invulnerable. Do such seemingly all-round teachers, researchers and staunch critics of outsiders really exist? Admittedly, and fortunately, they do not form a vociferous majority but they do exist and they can be deadly enemies of the outsider on senates and academic boards.

*A Proposal*

A PROPOSED TEACHING AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A proposal which seeks to extend and strengthen the existing Senate Sub-Committee on Teaching comes before senate on 14 December. As chairman of the present sub-committee and main instigator of the proposal for the new committee I would like to explain the reasons which lie behind the suggested change and point to some of the benefits which could accrue to this university as a whole if the scheme were accepted.

The existing sub-committee was originally set up to organize the introductory programme for new faculty. This it has done for the past ten years and any new committee will carry on the work. There are, however, other important tasks related to teaching, learning and curriculum development generally to which such a committee should address itself. The importance of the proposed new initiative is increased by the changing economic and social climate in which we now operate. For some time at least there will be contraction in this sector and we will almost certainly have to face the prospect of teaching more students with less resources. The efficiency with which our entire teaching programme operates, therefore, becomes of prime concern. In these circumstances we should be concerned with a number of questions. What are our priorities in teaching? Have we considered our objectives and how we might best achieve them? Why do we teach in the way we do? How effective are our present methods? Have we become inflexible? What are the alternatives? Are they suitable for this University? Should we devote as much time and interest to teaching as we do to research? With these questions in mind the new committee will be charged with responsibility for stimulating and supporting initiatives by faculty in the following areas:

1 The general monitoring and evaluation of courses

*A Proposal cont.*

2 The systematic improvement of existing courses and the development of new courses
3 Research into the possible application of new developments in educational technology to teaching and learning within the university
4 The adoption, by individuals or groups, of such developments in educational technology as seem appropriate for use in university courses
5 The development of teaching and learning materials (including printed booklets, slides, audio and video tapes, learning programmes, etc.)
6 The updating and improving of teaching skills by any member of faculty
7 Experimentation with modes of teaching not generally used at this university
8 Attention to student learning, and particularly to the way in which students might be introduced to more effective methods of studying
9 The study of organizational aspects of teaching and learning and how they might be improved

The committee would seek to create a climate in which such work would be given the prominence which it deserves. Teaching and research are together important for the future of this university: we should seek to attain excellence in both.

Members of the present sub-committee will continue to be part of the new committee but the group will be strengthened by increased representation from all parts of the university, including several heads of academic departments. Regular meetings are planned and it is probable that sub-groups will be formed from time to time to pay special attention to one or more of the areas mentioned above. Members of faculty who are not members of the committee will be invited to join these sub-groups. Workshops and seminars will also be offered, covering all aspects of teaching and learning.

The Education Department, several members of which have expertise in the field of curriculum development, will make a major contribution to the activities of this new committee. If the proposal is accepted the committee will also have a small budget with which to support those activities which need, for instance, extra secretarial help, additional materials, extra photocopying, etc. Individual

*A Proposal cont.*

members of faculty will be encouraged to apply for small grants from this budget.

This is an exciting prospect. Not since the university was created more than 20 years ago has the potential for an important advance on the teaching front been so close at hand. I hope that you will give the proposal your support and if you have a particular interest in any of the areas mentioned, or indeed in any matters not covered which you think should be included, may I invite you to contact me.

*A Reply*

THE PROPOSED TEACHING AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

An open letter to the chairman and members of the present Senate Sub-Committee on Teaching

I read with concern and some anger your statement in last week's newsletter in which you outlined the tasks of the proposed new committee. I am taking the first available opportunity to reply publicly and at some length to what I regard as an implicitly condescending and, at times, insulting proposal.

I wish, here, to remain anonymous (although the anonymity will, I assure you, not continue in the senate debate next week) in name and department, not for any sinister or fainthearted reason but simply to make the point that who I am and what subject area I represent does not matter: I firmly believe that I speak for the majority of lecturers in this university who like me will be angered by what seems to be a thinly disguised criticism of our professional ability and conscientiousness as university teachers.

May I first remind you of the job that I (and my colleagues) do. I work, on average, approximately 50 hours each week and I take 5 to 6 weeks' holiday per year (usually accompanied by books and journals!) During the year I do a variety of tasks and this is reflected in my day-to-day work. I teach, study, research and write about it, sit on committees, interview students, counsel students, write letters, reports, references, agendas and minutes and organize my room like a small office (with minimal secretarial assistance), attend conferences when they seem appropriate, spend more time than I would like to calculate assisting in the work of my own professional body and other external bodies such as the CNAA.

*A Reply cont.*

Over the 7 years that I have worked here I have attempted to reach a satisfactory distribution of time between these activities although this becomes increasingly difficult as my teaching load increases. There are some imperatives, mainly related to fixed teaching hours: these are certain departmental expectations, to do with taking one's fair share of the administrative load; and there are the usual unexpected crises that demand immediate attention. But the rest of the time (about 50 per cent of the 50 hours weekly) is mine to use according to my own priorities. The rules of the promotion game specify that further career advancement depends upon number of publications and, whatever else may be espoused by your committee or other officials of the university, it is clear to me that what I do in my research, and what I write and publish as a result, is what will count if I seek jobs or promotion here or elsewhere. My time is, therefore, inevitably drawn towards that activity. But it would be unjust of me to suggest that my efforts are extended in the direction of research against my will. First and foremost I regard myself as a scholar. My own study and research give me a great deal of personal satisfaction. I enjoy what I do: I believe that I contribute something to the advancement of human knowledge and I am not averse to any personal prestige which comes my way as a result.

Next I will deal with teaching, which is your committee's major concern, but which, for me, is only part, albeit an important part, of my work. Teaching is a task we all have in common. Whatever research we do and however much we involve ourselves in administration or internal politics, anyone of my status in this university finds teaching a precisely calculated proportion of their job. More sums are done in connection with my teaching, more formulae are derived to ensure that I and others do the 'right' amount, more bargaining takes place and more misunderstandings occur in connection with any other aspect of my work. It does not take a genius to realize that aggregate teaching hours are the main visible organizational input from which is derived the main visible output — certificated students. Teaching is, therefore, a highly important task and I and my colleagues treat it as such. I am expected formally to teach 10 hours per week but recent changes in the 'formula' have meant that I must spread these notional hours out over about one-third more students. This, believe me, has caused a great deal of heart searching but in general it has meant that whatever my feeling to the contrary I now teach more hours per week.

*A Reply cont.*

I do not pretend to enjoy all aspects of my teaching. With some groups it is a joy, with others it is sheer drudgery. Marking large quantities of written work each week is not the most exciting task. The position is not helped by an apparent shortage of books in the library and a reduction in the funds needed to replenish depleted stocks. Photocopying of learning materials is becoming more difficult with restrictions on spending and the implementation of copyright regulations.

But I have grown used to these problems. If there is one thing a university lecturer requires today besides energy and intelligence it is adaptability. The need to survive in a financially hostile environment, to keep a group of students interested and involved, to maintain a sense of fulfilment against a background of growing uncertainty and to come out at the end of the day, week, term or year, with sufficient energy to do other things requires considerable flexibility and ingenuity, not some vague and unproven ideas from 'educational technology' and 'curriculum development'.

The 'technology' I have had to learn is how to keep my teaching within bounds. Already I over-teach (if I take my nominal allowance as the base-line) by about 20 per cent. If I am to maintain a fair balance between my teaching and my other work the excess must stop there. I cannot afford to have students knocking at my door asking for help every few minutes, neither can I tolerate poor work from students during the term or in exams. I'm tough but not ruthless: I distance myself because I have to, but I still care. I sometimes appear insensitive but I worry a lot about my responsibilities to those who are just setting out on the academic road. As a result I have to think very hard about my teaching style and methods. I experiment often; I discuss possible alternative methods with my colleagues; I listen with interest to ideas that my colleagues have about teaching and learning.

I am experienced in lecturing, seminar work, tutorials, individual supervision and personal tutoring. I use, or have used, handouts, transparencies, film and videotapes. I have tried student-led seminars, projects, dissertations, open-book and take-away exams, etc. — you name it (although you probably have a longer word for it) and I, or some of my colleagues, have probably tried it. Such ideas provide variety but they almost certainly do not add much to the quality of learning and they most definitely do not save time.

*A Reply cont.*

I believe that one of the things a student needs most is some indication as to how he or she is progressing: even those who are slacking still like to be told. I spend much more time than I should (according to my teaching allowance) in writing lengthy comments on submitted work and in seeing students individually. I also happen to believe that a lecturer needs to know how he or she is getting on: I listen to students and if they don't tell me I ask them. I believe that as a result I have a very good idea as to what goes well and what doesn't. I will change my plans, not only year by year or term by term, but hour by hour if I feel it is necessary. Please do not try to convince me that by working out a set of objectives and an associated learning and assessment scheme I will improve my teaching. If I look back over my teaching for the past three years I could write six different sets of retrospective 'objectives' for the same course, none of which would have been foreseeable or applicable throughout the entire course. Neither is there much point in the educational technologists' idea of setting the course up for the correct audience: I don't know what my audience is going to be really capable of until about half way through the term and even then I'm usually still not entirely sure.

You also talk about study skills. Do you really believe that you can generalize on such a matter as this? Do you really expect us to believe that study can be talked about in isolation from a particular course, ignoring personality factors, immediate personal concerns, and particularly motivational and developmental stages in a student's life? I have done a great deal of counselling (under the name of personal tutoring) and have found that what a student wants to know is what a tutor expects and the form in which, and the time at which, he expects it. In this way the student quickly learns how to do a good project, essay or paper. If he doesn't, then there are other problems which have nothing to do with fast reading, or the structure of essays, or writing lab reports — and these he has to work through with friends, tutors or perhaps parents and professional counsellors.

Next I would like to turn to the matter of research versus teaching. Your comments imply that we devote time to one at the expense of the other but I must repeat what has been said many times before — teaching and research depend upon each other. If I ever had any idea that I would pursue my own research separately from my teaching, I soon changed. Teaching is such a major part of my intellectual life, it demands so much reading, thinking,

*A Reply cont.*

preparation, discussion, marking and rethinking that it is impossible to compartmentalize it. If I read a book or article it is not for teaching any more than another book I read, or project I carry out, is just for research. I work within an area of knowledge, it is true, but my intelligence knows no tight subject boundaries nor does it distinguish between research and teaching. I become interested and excited by a topic, concept, theory or whatever and I research it: there is no shutter that comes down which prevents that from influencing my teaching. But it is not just one way. As a result of my teaching last year I found several areas of considerable theoretical importance poorly researched. The reading I and my students could do in these areas was clearly unsatisfactory and limited. As a result my research has taken a new direction and one of those students is now doing postgraduate work and assisting me in that field.

So what can be the purpose of your committee? You mention the possibility of workshops and seminars. What topics would you choose? If they are subject-related then I would be interested, but what do you know about my subject? My department's faculty meetings, research seminars, examiners' meetings and the conferences organized by professional institutions provide a much better-informed forum for the discussion of teaching within my subject. If your workshops and seminars are not subject-related, then participants are forced to look at the general theories about teaching and learning and, from what I have seen and heard, these do not impress me. You certainly won't get away with lecturing me about lectures or seminars. If you are more subtle you may offer me the possibility of thinking about and discussing teaching with colleagues in other departments. Perhaps I would learn something, perhaps I would not, but I would certainly not put the potential experience high upon my list of priorities: in fact it would come fairly low.

You will gather from my comments that I will not be supporting your proposal in senate: neither will many of my colleagues. Your good intention and firm endeavour are understood: your ideas, assumptions and approach, however, are not. I would like to suggest that instead of wasting your time exhorting others to develop the curriculum you join in the fray with the rest of us and make our already diminished resources go that little bit further.

Anon.

2

# OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS

Attempts by individuals or groups to change the ways or thoughts of others are as old as war and politics, or even as old as charm and guile themselves. At the international level, efforts by nations to influence and change each other are an integral part of world politics. In education, major efforts have been made to develop the curriculum and its organizational context through the work of specially appointed individuals, groups or organizations referred to here as 'outsiders'. There are many similarities between international politics and planned educational change activated in this way, and there is a definite sense in which the role of the diplomat in world affairs is similar to that of the outsider in educational change — an idea which is referred to again in later chapters.

In the present context, the term 'outsider' will be taken to include all individuals or groups who are, in one way or another, charged with the task of changing the ideas, attitudes or working practices of those who are involved in the educational system. Bodies such as the Schools Council, the Council for Educational Technology or the National Foundation for Educational Research fall within the category of outsiders. They, or the projects which they support, are often specifically charged with the task of planning and implementing educational change and their potential influence is far-reaching across a wide range of educational institutions.

But there are also outsiders within institutions, distinguishable from insiders by the work which they perform. There are now many organizational roles associated with educational change and those who fill them operate (full time or part time) either as individuals or in groups or units. The following are examples: a curriculum advisor or consultant, an educational technology specialist, a staff development officer, an educational development unit, a centre for educational technology, a staff training committee or a teaching and learning support group. There are many possible titles which such individuals or groups may be given, and many possible functions which they may perform, but common to all of them is their responsibility for bringing about change through intervention in the working lives of others within the same institution.

The process in which all outsiders are engaged — whether they are a team working on a nationally-funded project or an individual working alone in a college or school — has many features and many underlying problems which are common to them all. The university example described in the previous chapter provides a starting point for an analysis of the process of

outside intervention and its attendant problems and possibilities. This particular incident raises a number of questions which, although specific to the situation described, are also of concern in the process of educational change in most situations. The main questions are these: What lies behind the proposal? What problems does the initiative encounter? and What alternative strategies might the outsider have used? These questions will be considered in relation to the specific situation of universities, but, as will be seen, both the questions and the answers have relevance to educational change generally.

## THE RATIONALE

What kind of activity and reasoning preceded and provided the impetus for the particular initiative described in Chapter 1. From the chairman's letter (p.5) it is clear that some activity involving outsiders was already taking place in the university. A sub-committee on teaching had, some years earlier, been set up to organize a training (the chairman prefers the word introductory) programme for new faculty. This form of outside involvement is common in universities and until 1981 was given central support and encouragement by the Coordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers.[1] A paper produced by the co-ordinating officer of that committee (Matheson 1978) notes that by 1977 all but four universities had senate committees whose sole or major remit was the training of academic staff. He also notes that fifteen institutions had central units with responsibility for training and twenty had appointed individuals on a full or part-time basis to co-ordinate their training activities. The setting up of a committee and/or the appointment of individuals with specific responsibility for training or staff development activities is also common in other sectors of education. Greenaway and Harding (1978) indicate that most polytechnics made some provision for staff development and a National Foundation for Education Research project completed in 1981[2] suggests a trend in this direction in technical colleges.

The chairman of the university teaching sub-committee referred to thus occupied a generally recognized role in connection with introductory training for new faculty. His committee had organized the programme, presumably satisfactorily, for ten years. The training issue was one which had been the subject of some debate and pressure nationally and this had led to agreements and the creation of various supportive actions by central bodies. For instance: the National Union of Students established a Commission on

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[1] Central Funding ceased in 1981 and the committee was formally disbanded, only to be replaced by another committee comprised mainly of university lecturers interested or involved in staff development work.

[2] Staff Development in Further Education; project leader Dr J. Bradley; 1978-1981; report not published at the time of going to press.

Teaching in Higher Education which in its report (NUS 1969) called for compulsory training for all lecturers; the Association of University Teachers had also negotiated an agreement with the University Authorities Panel (UAP/AUT 1974) requiring each university to provide training 'of a helpful and comprehensive nature' for probationary lecturers; and from 1972 onwards the University Grants Committee provided £130,000 to fund nineteen research and development projects connected mainly with the training of university teachers.

This particular outsider role, concerned with 'training' new faculty, albeit in a very limited way, had therefore become established in universities by the early 1970s. However, the chairman of the sub-committee was, according to his letter, seeking to extend this foothold and take new inititatives going far beyond initial training. The 9-point programme he was offering incorporated course evaluation, course development, the production of teaching and learning materials, attention to student learning problems and what appeared to be some involvement in organizational development. This, in total, represented a proposed 'outside' intervention in the teaching/learning process of the university of some magnitude. But, as with initial training, the chairman could have pointed to precedents to support his proposal.

Several universities already had units or centres providing support and advice in connection with a broad range of curriculum issues. During the 1967-72 quinquennium the University Grants Committee provided special grants for nine universities to set up what were known as 'high activity centres'. These were to introduce educational technology into the teaching and learning process and although most of the funds were used to establish, equip and staff television studios, initiatives in connection with other forms of teaching and curriculum development had also been taken. A few universities had appointed, on a full-time or part-time basis, educational advisers who offered advice to members of faculty, and sometimes students, on all kinds of teaching and learning problems.

Externally too, there were several developments which stimulated interest in curriculum development in universities. The founding of the Society for Research into Higher Education with its publications and conference activities and the funding by the Nuffield Foundation of a number of inter-institutional curricular projects involving several subject areas, followed by the creation of the Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education all contributed in this respect. The University Grants Committee's sponsorship of the training projects mentioned earlier also had some spill-over effect in the curriculum field generally. There was a growing literature on the subject of curriculum development in higher education, much of it giving examples of, or pointing to, the need for research and development in the field. There were some similar developments in polytechnics and technical colleges.

The chairman and his sub-committee were therefore not entering

entirely uncharted territory in putting forward their proposal — but they might have borne in mind that they were in a minority in the university sector and that initiatives made in other institutions had met, at best, a mixed reception (Hewton 1975). Therefore, although the timing of the proposal might have seemed right (particularly in view of the government's financial policy resulting in a growing need for economies), the initiative was one that carried with it considerable risk: a risk which, as it turned out in the example, proved extremely high.

## GAINING ACCEPTANCE

Prior to the exchange of views between the chairman and the lecturer in the university's newsletter, the chances were that the activities of the teaching sub-committee would have been known to very few people within the university. For the vast majority of staff this 'outsider' group would either have been entirely unknown or regarded with relative disinterest. This is not an unusual situation and the Nuffield Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education, when visiting universities and polytechnics, found that a great many academics did not know of the existence of outsider roles of this kind on their campus and student knowledge of such services was in most institutions virtually nil.

In many cases such lack of awareness on the part of academics is partly explained by their greater interest in research. Halsey and Trow (1971), in their study *British Academics*, asked about lecturers' interest in teaching and research. Ten per cent admitted that their interest was heavily biased towards research; 54 per cent had some interest in both but leaned towards research; and the remaining 36 per cent were interested in both but with a bias towards teaching. Thus, it seems possible that outsider roles which are created to bring about changes in teaching and learning are not likely to spring to the attention of the two-thirds majority whose interests tend towards research.

There were, however, ways in which the chairman could bring his proposal to the notice of a wider audience. University government is based upon the notion of collegial responsibility and this involves the creation of numerous committees which provide a regular forum for the discussion of all matters of interest and relevance to members. There would therefore be a number of opportunities for the proposal to be raised and discussed in committee. The senate (with as many as a hundred or so members) is at the pinnacle of this structure and it is towards this body that the proposal was heading, having passed through other minor committees.

The chairman sought further publicity through the regularly produced and widely read newsletter. In most universities, a free document of this kind is published and is regarded as an important means (requiring only a quick scan) of keeping up-to-date on current matters. An insertion in the newsletter would generally ensure a wide circulation and the item would tend to catch the eye of those who might see in it something of benefit or detriment

to themselves or their department. Publicity was, therefore, a double-edged weapon. If the information were acceptable, advertising might prove worthwhile: if it were not, opponents would be forewarned. This was the first risk the chairman felt obliged to take. Could he sell the proposal in this way and gain support before the senate meeting?

The response from the lecturer (claiming to represent a majority of insiders) indicated the probable degree of non-acquiescence. In times of expansion and growth, tacit acceptance, however grudging, for such activities would not usually be witheld. A gentlemen's agreement 'to live and let live' would generally hold, particularly where extra resources were available for distribution each year. Experimentation and innovation by a small group would probably be regarded as unlikely to do harm: some good might even come of it. For most insiders, provided the outsider's activities did not intrude upon their domain, their work could be left to take its course. Those insiders who wished to become involved would do so: the remainder would continue to pursue their own interests.

In times of economic stringency, however, tacit acceptance turns into quizzical and sometimes hostile interest. All expenditure must be questioned, and if the activity were brought into the limelight there would tend to be demand for its value to the institution to be demonstrated. In this the chairman would be at a disadvantage and would face built-in prejudices. As the lecturer commented: 'I would like to suggest that instead of wasting your time exhorting others to develop their curriculum you join the fray with the rest of us and make our already diminished resources stretch that little bit further.'

The chairman was clearly aware of this danger and of the need to impart the idea of a good investment: 'we may have to face the prospect of teaching still more students with less resources. The efficiency with which our entire teaching programme operates therefore becomes of prime concern.' There is an implicit analogy here with the benefits of industrial investment: an amount is withdrawn from production and invested in machinery in order to improve the efficiency of the production process. Greater industrial efficiency can usually be demonstrated by established economic accountancy principles, but the inputs and outputs of education and their relationship to each other are not so easily calculated. To demonstrate improved efficiency is a virtually impossible task and the chairman would be unlikely to succeed on this score. To gain acceptance he must resort to other means.

## GAINING SUPPORT

The chairman faces an extremely difficult task in convincing senate of the value of his proposals. Furthermore, if the views expressed in the lecturer's letter are at all representative he will encounter considerable apathy and even resistance in implementing his proposals should he overcome the first hurdle. What means has he for enlisting greater support for the programme: both in steering it through the committees and then in persuading insiders actually

to take part?

The first problem is that there is very little power attached to what is a somewhat nebulous position in terms of the university's structure. The chairman, apart from the respect he may be accorded by those who know him and his work, commands no real authority through this particular role vis-à-vis most other members of the institution. A broadly similar situation exists in most educational establishments, but it is particularly marked in universities where the division of the institution into separate, relatively autonomous units (departments), and the considerable autonomy of those who work within them, largely neutralizes any attempt to exercise authority from the centre.

The organization, anyway, is not bureaucratic: there is no chain of command, and decisions are, ostensibly, made through discussion and consent. In these circumstances the collegial principle of universal participation and the right of all members to have an equal say in all matters of interest or concern to them ensures that no one attached to a central committee can 'pull rank' in matters to do with teaching and learning. If authority in connection with curriculum matters rests anywhere, it is with subject departments. Although, within departments, the collegial principle of decision making is adopted, the head of department might be expected to exercise some influence amongst his colleagues.

This is an important point and deserves some further mention in the present context. Normally, heads will have achieved recognition for their research and scholarship within a particular discipline and this recognition will be accorded to them by professional colleagues within and outside their own institution. Usually, on this basis, they will have been offered and have accepted administrative responsibility and a leadership role within their department. Their authority over their departmental colleagues, stemming from their appointment to office, however, is not entirely clear: it will depend upon a mixture of factors including professional status, personality and traditions within the institution.

A survey covering four departments in one university suggests that heads of department rely for much of their power upon their ability to influence the reward system (Startup 1979). He explains the situation as follows:

> 'But the chief way in which the head could influence the conduct of his staff was through his control over the progress of their careers — more especially at the key points of gaining (or failing to gain) tenure, passing (or failing to pass) through the efficiency bar and earning (or failing to earn) promotion to the grade of senior lecturer or reader. At these various stages, though the key decision was taken by a university committee, information of crucial importance was sought from the departmental head. In the case of promotion the head's influence was even greater for it was normal for him to take the initiative in putting forward the names of candidates from among his staff. An awareness of these various procedures affected the staff evaluation of the depart-

mental head. Nor did his influence end there, for a lecturer applying for a job elsewhere was expected to give the name of his departmental head as a reference.' (p.82)

The chairman, by including heads of department on his committee, is therefore attempting to tap this power over evaluation and reward and to strengthen his hand as a consequence. But it is doubtful whether, when used in this situation, a head's authority would be regarded by his departmental colleagues with any degree of seriousness, because the sanctions which he possesses in his departmental role are normally associated more with research than teaching. As the lecturer pointed out in his letter: 'The rules of the promotion game specify that further career advancement depends upon number of publications and whatever else may be espoused by your committee or other officials of the university, it is clear to me that what I do in my research, and what I write and publish as a result, is what will count if I seek jobs or promotion here or elsewhere.'

The committee then may gain some status by having within its membership some senior officials: this status is however not readily translated into a power that will bring forth support from those insiders towards whom the proposal is directed. This support must be enlisted by engaging the interest of lecturers: the mission must be seen as worthwhile and the credibility of those who are involved must be highly regarded.

To sell the proposal and gain the acceptance and interest of a large number of people through committee papers and newsletter correspondence is a difficult task. The chairman has done his best and has set out a package based partly upon the conventional wisdom of educational technology and partly upon some vaguely-conceived notions of collaborative problem solving. The fact that this package was not an attractive one to the hostile correspondent, and that much in it provided him with ammunition to snipe at the whole venture, is not entirely the chairman's fault. Certainly he might have done a better job of describing the activities in more detail and some of the insider's guns might have been spiked had more care been taken in thinking through and presenting the proposal. But the problem lies deeper than this. It has much to do with the nature of a lecturer's job; the failure of much educational research and development to speak to the practical difficulties involved in the work; and the specificity of the interests and concerns which are generated by the many differing disciplinary specialisms to which the insiders are attached. These points are closely interrelated, and can give rise to a serious split between the understanding and approach of the outsiders and the needs of the insiders.

## DIVISIONS BETWEEN INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

The insider, when replying to the proposal, felt it necessary to point out to the chairman the complex nature of the work he was engaged in; the increasing pressures which were being brought to bear upon him and the steps he was taking to cope with the situation. Implicit in his letter was the

message — you don't appear to know and understand my job: if you did you would not make this kind of proposal.

To what extent is this true? Has the chairman failed to recognize the real problems of his potential clientele? Has he, or have his colleagues, made any real attempt to study the work and problems of individual lecturers and departments, or to come to grips with the differences between separate subjects in so far as their values, attitudes and working practices are concerned? The answer must be a qualified no. The chairman, as a long-standing member of the university, will have learned a great deal about its workings, but his knowledge of the life within individual departments will be severely restricted by the very compartmentalization which stems from a specialist departmental structure.

Most educational research and the proposed developments which have stemmed from it has, in the past, been concerned with general problems of teaching and learning rather than those associated with teaching in particular disciplines, and has tended to suggest general solutions. It has thus attracted the criticism that it does not engage with the realities of everyday teaching. It tends to offer deceptively simple and universalistic formulae for good teaching. As McIntyre (1980) points out, there has been an 'enthusiastic propogation of facile simple solutions' rather than an attempt to gain greater understanding 'of why things happen as they do in specific situations'. Educational technology, upon the principles of which the chairman places some reliance in his proposal, is one area in which research and development has tended to generalize, systematize and simplify the complex nature of teaching and learning and its social and organizational milieu.

The insider dealt some fairly hard blows to the principles involved in the educational technology approach — for instance: 'If I look back over my teaching for the past three years I could write six different sets of retrospective 'objectives' for the same course, none of which would have been foreseeable or applicable throughout the entire course'.

There is a further problem with research which seeks to offer general solutions: it is, itself, carried out by specialists. Becher (1980) comments on this situation as follows:

> 'Typically, the educational researcher begins by selecting a particular aspect of education which lends itself to study in terms of the approach dictated by his own specialism. He goes on to conduct his study in terms of the approach which that specialism imposes. If questions arise which are not regarded as falling within the legitimate boundaries of his discipline, he ignores them — for they are not his affair. He bends his subject matter to his professional requirements, not his requirements to the subject matter.' (p.67)

Educational research and development may have become a field of academic interest for various disciplinary specialisms but it has not, in itself, attained (and some doubt that it ever will) the coherence, status and

credibility stemming from established concepts, theories and methodologies normally associated with a specialist subject area. It is at best a useful amalgam of ideas culled from other subjects such as psychology, philosophy, sociology and the natural sciences. As Bligh (1978) points out:

> '. . . there are many neighbouring disciplines which may stimulate research in education . . . but their "frames of reference" methods and contexts of enquiry, canons of criticism, conceptual schemas, presuppositions — call them what you will — vary. They cannot cohabit in education enquiry without conceptual, methodological or contextual confusion.' (p.55)

Insiders, reading literature based upon often unco-ordinated disciplinary mixtures, are indeed likely to be confused. They will generally find it difficult to discover a coherent underlying structure to the discussion, the paradigms of enquiry will usually be unclear, the philosophical assumptions will seem confused. What is worse, the search for status and credibility may well have led the author to adopt a pseudo-scientific language which is at once both pompous and meaningless. But to be fair, the evolution of most subjects is marked by the emergence of a technical language. Why not curriculum development also? No doubt communication could be made more efficient by the use of an in-language. But, sadly, there are few new accepted terms or concepts within the field, most having been borrowed from elsewhere.

Some outsiders, sensitive to this problem, take it upon themselves to write for the insiders rather than their own outsider reference group. Theirs is the more difficult task: for whereas they can expect empathy and encouragement from those within their field, insiders are less predictable and, what is more important, are certain to be heterogeneous in terms of their background and thus in their interpretation and understanding of what is written.

There will tend to be considerable differences in expectation among those in different disciplinary fields as to what is acceptable as evidence, what will convince and what will lead to rethinking and change. Writing for a general academic audience, therefore, becomes extremely difficult. But it is not just writing which raises this problem; it also pervades the whole area of curriculum discussion. As the lecturer put it in his letter: 'If they (the workshops and seminars) are subject-related then I would be interested, but what do you know about my subject? . . . If your workshops and seminars are not subject-related, then participants are forced to look at the general theories about teaching and learning. . . .'

Academics feel strongly about the integrity of their subject areas, particularly when there is the least sign of encroachment from outside. A professor writing in The Times Higher Educational Supplement about a staff development programme in his university put it this way:

> 'Moreover, in any university, or even in one of its faculties, there is such a variety of disciplines, both traditional and new, that there is nothing

remotely pertinent one can say to people dealing with such diverse areas of learning as medieval history and classical tragedy, Renaissance criticism and the modern French novel, political constitutions and comparative philology, apart from giving them such tips as clearing their throats before speaking and not talking to the class while writing on the blackboard.' (Singh 1976)

Another senior academic put the case another way:

'One of the most powerful sources [of suspicion of proposed change] is the proprietary pride of the practitioner of any art or craft and the associated conviction that his practice cannot be adequately described still less legitimately assessed and condemned by anybody who is not himself a practitioner of greater or at least comparable experience. This mistrust of the mere theorist is liable to be stronger still when it becomes more reflective, when the teacher's understanding of his own problem and practices is mature enough to reveal to him that not even the experienced practitioners can describe in general terms — except possibly in terms that are too general to be interesting or useful — how he does what he does. Accordingly there is resentment against the theorist even when he is a fellow practitioner.' (Renford Banbrough 1975)

These are strong defences. In essence, insiders believe in: the distinctiveness of their own discripline; the need for a long apprenticeship to reach the stage of master craftsman; and most importantly, perhaps, the fact that the development of that discipline is a matter for the practitioner, not the outsider. The chairman and his group will need considerable skill to overcome the resistances which will stem from these beliefs.

3

# STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Has the chairman thought out a strategy for achieving the acceptance and implementation of the outsider's policy? Can this be inferred from his newsletter statement? It is worth looking again at the main points of the package offered.

> '. . . The new committee will be charged with responsibility for stimulating and supporting initiatives by faculty in the following areas.
>
> 'Course evaluation; course development, research into and use of educational technology; production of teaching and learning materials; improvement of teaching skills; innovation in teaching methods; improving student learning; study of organizational aspects of teaching and learning.
>
> 'Regular meetings are planned and it is probable that sub-groups will be formed from time to time to pay special attention to one or more of the areas mentioned above. Members of faculty who are not members of the committee will be invited to join these sub-groups. Workshops and seminars will also be offered covering all aspects of teaching and learning.
>
> 'The committee will also have a small budget to support the activities. . . .'

An important point to note about this proposal is its lack of detail on certain issues. For instance: What resources are available apart from a small budget? The new and extended committee will be expected to *encourage* and *support* certain activities — but how? How much time will the chairman and members of the committee put into the activities? How will the special sub-groups be formed and what exactly will they do? Who will organize the workshops and seminars and what topics will they cover? How much time will members of faculty — the insiders — be expected to devote to the activities and how far will these activities differ from what they do already? To what extent is there an assumption of insider-outsider co-operation? What kind of benefit can the insider expect to receive as a result of such co-operation?

Another point to note is that the locus of responsibility for actually doing the work implied by the proposal is far from clear. To stimulate and support initiatives by faculty suggests a peripheral role for the outsiders: committees,

in any case, are not noted for their active involvement in research and development. It sounds as though the insiders may be expected to carry the main burden of any work involved. But the kind of activities suggested and the way they are described also suggests a reliance upon educational research and technological knowledge, and their application to curriculum matters. For instance: the systematic improvement and development of courses; research into the possible application of educational technology; the development of teaching materials — all these assume the existence of knowledge, skills and technology which can be applied to teaching and learning, and furthermore that committee members are aware of these, and can call upon individuals to explain and use them as required.

It is doubtful whether the outsiders have attempted to draw up and follow through a consistent strategy for their proposal. They appear to be reacting to a situation, as they see it, in the best way they can. They are probably aware of some new developments in educational technology and have some knowledge of what is being tried elsewhere. They may also feel they have some understanding of the workings of their own organization and a limited power to do things which directly affect the work of others. They are perhaps aware that external circumstances may be on their side in so far as the economic climate is putting pressure on the existing system which needs to adapt itself to new, financially stringent, conditions. It therefore probably seems a reasonable course of action to combine these factors and put forward a 'timely' reminder that current practices may have to change and that there are alternatives which may be more efficient and which are worth exploring.

But bringing about change in deeply embedded attitudes and practices in an organization in which members and their departments have considerable autonomy requires much more than this. It requires an approach which is sensitive to many of the factors which the outsiders appear to have ignored. The questions now arise — what other approaches are there and would any of them have helped the group to overcome the resistances which they faced? Various alternative strategies are described in the extensive literature on change generally and educational change in particular: the outsiders might have been, but apparently were not familiar with them.

A typical general classification of strategies for change is suggested by Chin (1970). In brief it assumes that there are three broad categories. The first of these relates to what are called *empirical/rational* approaches. These involve: convincing people by rational means; appealing to reason and logic and disseminating information derived from basic and applied research. The second group are called *normative/re-educative* strategies. These involve attempts to affect the habits and values of individuals and groups. Particular attention is paid to changing the norms and values which are prevalent within an organization or group and to the ways in which people relate to each other in the course of their work.

The third group is termed *power/coercive*. The users of such strategies

attempt to bring about change through the use of political, economic, legal or moral sanctions.

In connection with educational change Havelock (1968) also suggests a triple classification. The first strategy is referred to as *research, development and diffusion* (RD&D) and has much in common with Chin's empirical/rational approach. A product (which in education might take the form of teaching and learning materials) is developed and tested after a period of research concerned with a particular problem. The product, embodying a solution, is then presented to those assumed to have the problem and it is expected that they will see for themselves the value of adoption. The second approach is called *social interaction*. This relies upon a loose association of individuals involved in the change process. The strategist uses informal networks to encourage the flow of information concerning the innovation. This is a variant on the previous approach using less formal means to reach and convince organizational members. The third strategy is known as *problem solving*, and has much in common with Chin's normative/re-educative approach. The strategist works with a client group within an organization, helping them to identify and diagnose problems and to seek out and implement solutions.

Zaltman et al. (1977), following a survey of approaches used in educational change, also suggest a somewhat similar triple classification under the broad titles: *empirical rational, manipulative* and *power* strategies.

A general summing-up of the various classifications suggests that most writers and researchers in this field recognize three broad alternatives: treat people as rational beings who will act in their own self-interests if properly convinced; engage in a form of social engineering in order to create new attitudes and perspectives; or use power to force people to change.

These strategies, however, are not mutually exclusive and a survey by Havelock and Huberman (1977)[1] of the innovation strategies used to promote educational change indicates that the above categories may become intermixed and produce a somewhat extended classification. Five categories are suggested. The first, *participative problem solving*, involves innovation controlled by local people, in which change is brought about in response to their needs, using local resources and self-help. The second, *open input*, is a broad and flexible approach in which attempts are made to make full use of all ideas and resources from both inside and outside of the local community. The third, *power*, concerns innovations which are clearly directed from above, using laws, formal procedures, a chain of command and designated agents for technical assistance in order to bring about change. The fourth, *diffusion*, relates to innovations which are spread mainly through the media and through informal networks of opinion. And finally *planned linkage*, in

[1] Although concerned with innovation in developing countries, the ideas seem generally applicable.

which innovation relies upon careful planning and the specification of clear goals and objectives related to a detailed analysis of the insiders' actual situation.

This fivefold classification, whilst incorporating the various categories referred to earlier (rational, normative and power), adds another dimension related to the degree of outsider v. insider control over the innovation process. For instance, the use of power to force through change implies outsider control whereas participative problem solving, relying mostly on self-help and local resources, suggests that control remains with the insiders. In between are three strategies which combine outsider and insider inputs and allow varying degrees of control to each party. Planned linkage clearly relies upon considerable inputs from outside experts (detailed problem analysis, specification of goals, systematic search for solutions, co-ordination of effort, etc.), but a great deal of attention is also devoted to securing co-operation between insiders and outsiders. The diffusion strategy relies upon the insiders' formal and informal communication networks but the messages which are fed into these networks are essentially those of the outsiders. Open input is the least predictable in these terms: it is opportunistic in the sense of using whatever resources are available and control will tend to vary between insiders and outsiders according to which resources are used and for what purpose.

In the university example discussed earlier it is difficult to associate the outsiders with any one of these strategies. For them the use of power is largely ruled out and the simple diffusion of information does not appear in the proposal, probably because past experience has shown that it is largely ineffective. Some of the statements suggest an interest in participative problem solving and there are hints of a planned linkage approach, but overall there is no clear strategy unless it falls under the remaining category — open input. Havelock and Huberman (op. cit. 1977), however, make the following comment in connection with this category:

> 'We are not sure whether this is representing a strategy or simply the lack of one. . . . The approach suggests a very pragmatic and perhaps opportunistic attitude towards innovation, casting aside ideologies and following the currently popular trends. While the idea of flexibility seems laudable one wonders whether more anchoring is needed to allow a project to build solidly and have lasting visible and memorable accomplishments. We are also left wondering who controls the innovation, to what ends and to whose benefit.' (p.254)

This, to a large extent, sums up the outsiders' proposal. They have opted for a non-strategy: it is not anchored to any clearly thought-out ideological position and it is not clear where control lies and who would benefit if the activities were to be undertaken.

The anonymous insider was left very little option other than to attack the proposal. It made no sense to him. Problem solving is an activity he engages in all the time in relation to his own teaching problems: what new ideas does

the outsider bring? Vague calls for co-operation are meaningless. If accepted they would only demand more of his time — and to what end? There is, to the insider, a huge gap between what is on offer and what is needed. An innovation strategy not geared initially to exploring, and subsequently to meeting his needs and those of his department must be rejected as far as he is concerned.

If this line of reasoning is pursued it becomes clear that the lack of a clearly thought-out strategy could well have defeated the outsiders' initiative almost before it got started. Perhaps they should first have explored the range of alternative strategies open to them, chosen one, worked through it together and devised a proposal based upon it. But which strategy should they have chosen? Advice on this is not easy to come by — much of the literature merely analyses the alternatives and, no doubt with good reason, leaves it to outsiders to devise their own approach according to their particular circumstances.

What are the circumstances which suggest or dictate strategy? Are they to do with the insiders — their ideologies, forms of organization and working practices, or with the outsiders — their values, beliefs, resources and power? How is the outsider to bring these together in order to gain a sense of direction and mission? These questions face all outsiders working towards educational change whether they be in universities, polytechnics, colleges or centrally-sponsored curriculum projects.

There is no easy solution and the approach generally adopted by outsiders towards the task of introducing educational change complicates matters. Most would tend to follow the seemingly logical path of formulating their policy and then seeking a strategy by which to implement their plans. Zaltman et al. (1977) clearly distinguish two stages in the process: 'When the planner begins to outline an approach for actually executing change his mode becomes strategic' (p.71).

The logic, however, is questionable. To separate policy and strategy and to assume that one naturally precedes the other is to ignore the practical complexities of the change process in which the two are closely interconnected. Taking the example cited in Chapter 1 it is possible to reconstruct the events which probably preceded the chairman's statement.

The adviser and the outsider group first attempt to define their task and clarify their priorities and general approach. They bring to the discussion many ideas about problems as they see them and what they think should be done to solve them. Discussions are limited by the time factor and the adviser seeks to reach agreement within the group as soon as possible in order to produce a policy statement. Ideas and their underlying values are not probed too deeply: the main criterion for their adoption tends to be their immediate attractiveness, economy and seeming feasibility. In these circumstances discussions are dominated by those with some knowledge of current trends and a flair for getting things done in committees. The actual needs of the insiders and their likely reactions to the proposals receive only minimal

consideration.

The adviser acts largely as an administrator at this stage, ensuring that business is done in accordance with the committee's terms of reference and timetable. Later, in his dealings with the insiders, he adopts the role of agent for the outsiders. He interprets policy and applies it as best he can. If, for instance, workshops are specified in the policy statement he organizes them or, if more attention to educational technology is recommended, he ensures that information and instruction in this connection are made available.

If the approach does not succeed he attributes failure to inadequate resources or to unreasonable resistance on the part of the insiders rather than to the inappropriateness of policy or strategy or both. The approach is one likely to produce the persona non grata situation depicted in Chapter 1.

There are some major problems and omissions in the process as described. First, little or no consideration has been given to the insiders' position, particularly as it is manifest in the forms of organization which they adopt, their working practices, their approach to education and educational change, and the values and ideologies which underpin all of these. Some members of the outsider group may have a little knowledge on this score but it is unlikely to be sufficiently detailed to allow the insiders' position to be fully analysed and understood.

The second problem concerns the lack of attention paid by the outsiders to the reasoning behind their own proposals. Account has not been taken of the fact that the ideas which individuals bring to the discussion are not free-floating, but are linked to a set of personal beliefs and values about education and educational change. Individuals have not been encouraged to explore these beliefs and values within the group and it is unlikely that anyone is even vaguely aware of how deeply he or she is committed to them. The outsiders therefore remain relatively ingnorant of their own positions — individually and as a group.

The third problem follows as a consequence of the previous two. No attempt has been made to compare the positions of the insiders and the outsiders. To what extent are the values upon which their positions are based compatible? Such questions have not been faced at all in the process described above and the absence of any discussion on these important issues leaves the choice of strategy to chance.

Strategy, however, need not be subsumed to policy: it can be made an integral part of the policy-making process and a potentially more effective, although operationally more difficult procedure might be envisaged as follows.

The adviser assumes an active leadership role from the start. Although he remains the chief representative of the outsider group he regards his main task as the introducer of change to other groups. He therefore directs his attention and energies towards working with both insiders and outsiders.

He is committed to understanding the position of the insiders with whom the outsiders must work, particularly the organization in which they

operate and the nature of the specific sub-groups which provide their daily working environment. He attempts to obtain as much information as possible about the insiders, using whatever literature, theories, models or stereotypes are available as well as the findings from any research which has been carried out or which the outsider might initiate in order to increase his stock of knowledge. He uses information of this kind in discussion with his own group and works towards the formulation of a more detailed policy as the positions of the insider groups are better understood.

Within the outsider group he encourages discussion of ideas and the beliefs and values which give rise to them. He also attempts to analyse and make explicit to the group his own value position in relation to education and educational change. He realizes that a general consensus of values amongst the group may be difficult to achieve and that lengthy discussions will probably lead to sharply contrasting attitudes towards the task in hand: but he also sees openness and explicitness in this respect as an essential element in policy making. He imposes no time restrictions for the making of detailed policy statements and is satisfied, in the early stages, with a brief, general statement of intent.

He is continually searching for strategies which will provide an effective bridge between the positions of insiders and outsiders and accepts that without a strategy which reconciles the potentially different positions of the two groups, change will be, at best, haphazard and difficult and, at worst, impossible. He subscribes to what Berman (1981) calls the process of 'mutual adaptation' in which both the innovation and the setting into which it is introduced are adapted to achieve a degree of compatibility.

To initiate and sustain an educational change programme on these lines is likely to be more difficult than the one described earlier. The time span for achieving any visible results will almost certainly be longer. Futhermore, most of the activities will tend to be concentrated on particular insider groups, rather than affect the organization as a whole, and will, therefore, not be easily visible to other members of the institution. Will any organization (university, college or central funding agency) be prepared to support or finance such a venture over a relatively long period — perhaps several years? The answer is probably a qualified yes — provided the overall strategy is understood by those who sponsor the work. An example of a programme which adopted this style of working is described in Chapter 7.

The three main elements in the approach described above are these: (1) the analysis of the position of the insider group or groups; (2) an analysis by the outsider group of their own position, and (3) the derivation of a flexible policy incorporating strategies designed to bridge the gap between the positions of the outsider and insider groups. These elements are, however, not necessarily sequential: they are not stages in the process of change. It is more likely that they will proceed together at various points and affect each other as the process continues.

The approach can be likened to the process of international diplomacy.

A diplomat is essentially a negotiator whose main task is to further the interests of his own state (Pearson 1959). To do this he must both understand the foreign policy which directs his work and be free to determine the negotiating strategy most likely to achieve policy objectives. He will be guided in his choice of strategy by his knowledge of the values of those with whom he is negotiating. This knowledge will enable him to empathize with the stance of his 'opposite number' whilst at the same time continuing to represent his own state. Furthermore, the knowledge which he gains of the foreign culture will continually be fed back to his own state where it may influence foreign policy.

Nicolson (1965) draws upon an eighteenth-century treatise by Colliere on 'The manner of negotiating with Princes' to illustrate this aspect of diplomacy.

> 'It is essential that a negotiator should be able to divest himself of his own opinion in order to place himself in the position of the Prince with whom he is negotiating. He should be able to enter into his views and inclinations — "If I were in the place of that prince, endowed with equal power, governed by identical prejudices and passions what effect would my own representation make upon myself?" ' (p.122)

This advice, intended for those employed in international diplomacy, will not be lost on those engaged in the task of bringing about educational change and the principles of diplomacy will be seen to underly much of what follows.

4

# INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Culture is, according to Tylor (1871), 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' Culture is usually associated with society as a whole but sub-cultures within society have for long been recognized and the concept is transferable to other contexts. Here it will be applied to educational organizations and to insider groups or units, such as academic departments.

Culture offers a unifying concept, in so far as it assumes certain similarities and a degree of consensus between members of a particular group, but, at the same time, it indicates the diversity which can be found betweeen groups. For the outsider culture offers some preliminary insights into a number of question which will be of concern in deciding policy and strategy. For instance, if faced with an attempt to introduce change, might a technical college react differently to say a college of education or a university? Or, might the approach needed to ensure the co-operation of a physics department in a polytechnic be different to that needed for say a law or history department? Or might the procedures and results which an electrical engineering department would expect from allowing outsiders to evaluate their courses or introduce changes into their teaching or courses differ from those expected by say a sociology or an English department?

A cultural perspective offers only a partial answer to such questions but it opens some windows on the insiders' world and identifies certain patterns of thinking and acting which may have some explanatory power when the outsiders — assuming the role of diplomats — approach the culture with a view to negotiating change. The topic is dealt with under two headings — organization and subject discipline: both are major factors in shaping the practices of insider groups.

## ORGANIZATIONS

The idea that there are different 'styles' of organization, which profoundly affect atmosphere, morale, communications, efficiency, adaptiveness and innovativeness within an institution, is far from new, and there is a growing body of literature on this theme. Although much of the writing is concerned with industrial organizations it is relevant to educational institutions.

A useful starting point is Harrison's (1972) rather simplified, but conceptually helpful notion of organizational character. He was initially struck by the extent to which many of the problems which surround

organizational change are based upon conflicting attitudes which individuals, from different styles of organization, bring to a discussion. He cites the following example in support of his argument.

During the setting up of an American factory in a foreign country it became clear that there were considerable differences between the Americans and the nationals with regard to decision making.

> 'The Americans tended to operate within a task-oriented ideology. In problem-solving meetings they believed that everyone who had relevant ideas or information should contribute to the debate, and that in reaching a decision the greatest weight should be given to the best-informed and most knowledgeable people. They strove, moreover, for a clear-cut decision; and once the decision was made, they usually were committed to it even if they did not completely agree with it.
>
> 'Some of the nationals, however, came to the project from very authoritarian organizations and tended to operate from a power-oriented ideological base. . . . Each individual seemed to be trying to exert as much control as possible and to accept as little influence from others as he could. If he was in a position of authority, he seemed to ignore the ideas of juniors and the advice of staff experts. If he was not in a position of authority, he kept rather quiet in meetings and seemed almost happy when there was an unclear decision or no decision at all. He would then proceed the way he had wanted to all along.
>
> 'The task-oriented people regarded the foregoing behaviour as uncooperative and, sometimes, as devious or dishonest. The power-oriented people, however, interpreted the task-oriented individuals' emphasis on communication and co-operation as evidence of softness and fear of taking responsibility.
>
> 'Each group was engaging in what it regarded as normal and appropriate practice and tended to regard the other as difficult to work with or just plain wrong. The fact that the differences were ideological was dimly realized only by the more thoughtful participants. The remainder tended to react to each other as wrongheaded *individuals*, rather than as adherents of a self-consistent and internally logical way of thinking and explaining their organizational world.' (p.120)

This provides an important illustration of the need to know the other culture. For an educational adviser it indicates the need to be aware of and sensitive to the problems which may arise through misunderstanding where parties to a discussion remain ignorant of the cultural background of those with whom they are negotiating.

Harrison suggests that there are four main styles of organization and calls them power, role, task and person. These categories have since been adopted and developed by Handy (1976), who maintains

> 'In organizations there are deep seated beliefs about the way work should be organized, the way authority should be exercised, people rewarded, people controlled. What are the degrees of formalization required? How much planning and how far ahead? What combination of obedience and initiative is looked for in subordinates? Do work hours matter, or dress, or personal eccentricities? . . . Do committees control or individuals? Are there rules and procedures or only results. These are all parts of the culture of an organization.' (p.177)

They are also matters which should be of concern to an outsider intent upon introducing change into a culture. Each culture offers to the outsider different kinds of opportunity and different forms of resistance.

Handy compares the *role culture* to a Greek temple (Figure 1).

*Figure 1 The Greek temple representing the role culture*

The pillars represent specialist units (usually departments) which are co-ordinated and controlled by a narrow band of senior management in the pediment. In this form of organization the role, or job description, is more important than the individual who occupies the position. Position power (the power which stems from the role description) is the major source of authority and clearly defined rules and procedures relating to job specification, limits of authority, settlement of disputes, etc. are the major form of influence.

The *task culture* has a dominant value system which emphasizes getting the job done. Roles are not so clearly defined and power is more related to personal expertise and influence than to the formal authority of an office. Influence is therefore more widely dispersed than in the role culture and tends to shift according to the job in hand. The organization seeks to bring together the appropriate resources at the right time in order to complete a specific task or project. People are more likely to work in teams and the task culture 'utilizes the unifying power of the group to improve efficiency and to identify the individual with the objectives of the organization.' This culture is represented by a net (Figure 2). Some of the strands are thicker than the others and power and influence are located at the interstices of the net.

The main difference between the two cultures lies in the tendency of the former to stress formal procedures and impersonality and the latter to be concerned with people and their relationships. Both seek to direct individuals

and groups towards the achievement of organizational goals but the former uses formal rules and authority whilst the latter relies more upon communities within the organization created and directed by individuals themselves. A similar distinction between organizational styles is made by Burns and Stalker (1966) in their analysis of two types of industrial firm which they refer to as 'mechanistic' and 'organismic'.

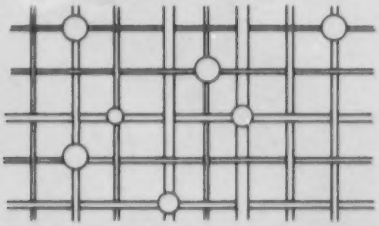

*Figure 2 The net representing the task culture*

The remaining two cultures are called person orientated and power orientated and they represent significant alternatives to the role and task cultures.

The *person culture*, according to Handy, is one in which the individual provides the central point of interest and whatever structure there is exists only to serve those within it. It comes into being when a group of individuals band together to follow their own goals or ideas in their own way but, at the same time, seek some common facilities and the support of others to assist them. It is depicted as a cluster (Figure 3).

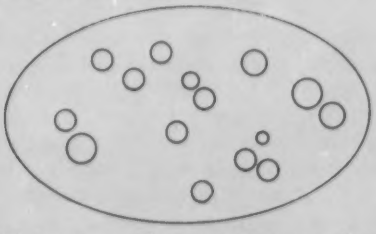

*Figure 3 The cluster representing the person culture*

As the organization is meant to exist only for those within it, it has no overriding objective. Handy suggests as examples: barristers' chambers, architects' partnerships and some small consultancy firms. He also suggests that some academics in universities use the organization as if it were a person culture. Members of these organizations are normally professionals who, although having considerable autonomy of action vis-à-vis their firm, may

well still be bound by strict rules and procedures imposed by their professional body. In such organizations influence is generally shared and based upon expertise. Individuals do what they are good at and are listened to on appropriate topics. They are free to give up their membership but the organization seldom has the power to evict them.

Finally the *power culture* is depicted by a web (Figure 4).

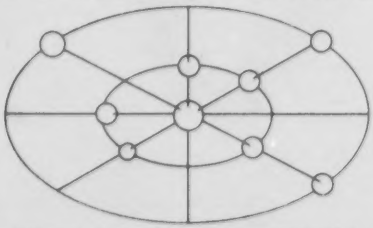

*Figure 4 The web representing the power culture*

There are few rules and procedures. Control is exercised by a powerful group at the centre through key individuals dispersed at strategic points in the web. Decisions are taken largely on the outcome of power struggles rather than on purely 'rational' grounds. Resource power is the major power base in this culture, with some elements of personal (charismatic) power at the centre. Emphasis is upon results and the means are less important. The culture therefore has a tough and abrasive side which creates a highly competitive atmosphere. There will be concern for the individual only in so far as he produces results. Such organizations may well suffer low morale and high turnover.

The four cultures outlined above represent organizational stereotypes unlikely to be found, in pure form, in practice. But a tendency towards one style or another is probable and it is important for the outsider involved in educational change to recognize this. There are, for instance, *some* technical colleges which clearly operate on the lines of a role culture with a definite hierarchy of authority, pronounced specialization into functionally separate departments, and an abundance of formal rules and procedures. By contrast there are *some* universities which appear to be more like a task culture, adopting a collegial approach to their work and relying more on personal expertise and influence than on formal authority, rules and procedures.

But, within any organization, departments may develop their own cultural style. For instance, some clerical and accounts departments, which adopt standardized procedures, will lean towards a role culture. Academic departments, however, may evolve quite differently and, depending upon a number of factors such as size, the personalities of the leading members, research interests, etc. may move closer to any one of the four organizational styles — role, task, person or power.

There are no firm guidelines to suggest that one type of institution — college, polytechnic or university — or any one kind of department can be linked to a particular culture. Each case has to be treated separately and the possibility of mixed cultures and contrasting sub-cultures within an organization must be carefully examined. Despite this, the notion of organizational cultures, and particularly dominant cultures, within an institution, or within a department, is a useful way of clarifying the complex mixture of factors which together give rise to a 'normal' way of doing things and offer some clue as to the reaction which might be expected to attempts by outsiders to introduce change. The importance of this to the adviser in working towards a strategy for change is clear. The kind of strategy he must choose, or not choose, will be determined, in part at least, by the kind of culture he is dealing with.

Assume, for instance, that the adviser identifies what seems to be a predominantly 'role' culture characterized by formal structure, a clearly defined hierarchy of authority, impersonal position power and centralized control exercised by senior management. If change is to be introduced, it is to those formally charged with responsibility for the functioning of particular parts of the organization that the outsider will turn. The assumption is that once top or middle management is persuaded that the change is in the interests of a particular department then implementation becomes a fairly formal matter. This is not to say that others, further down the hierarchy, will not require information and explanation, nor that there will not be problems, but that the flow of information is down the hierarchy and is dependent upon acceptance of a policy, plan or decision at the top. The likelihood is that in these circumstances the adviser will be attracted towards an empirical-rational strategy (see p.24) and will attempt to convince senior management of the measurable effects of the change for the organization as a whole or for specific parts of it.

This approach, which Tichy (1975) calls 'Analysis from the top', lies at the root of management philosophy in the role culture. It contains the assumption that most problems can eventually be solved by analysis and every attempt should be made to predict and prepare to deal with future uncertainties. Research and development should be an ongoing and essential part of the enterprise and results, whether concerned with new technology, markets, management systems, organizational structures, or staff development should be effectively incorporated into the overall decision-making process. Management consultancy thrives in this culture and it is here that outsiders, either employed by the host culture or hired from specialized agencies, play their part. Systems analysis, information technology, automation and standardization techniques are tools of the trade. Studies will be made of organization structures and how they might be more effectively integrated and improved. There will be attention to: the analysis of tasks; the addition or elimination of certain roles or units; the appropriateness of spans of control and number of hierarchical levels; and

alternative reward structures and how they might be more effectively integrated and improved.

The language used to explain approaches to change in this category is usually formal, and the methodology deductive. The procedures follow a logical and systematic pathway and emphasis is laid upon specific rigour and protocol. It is assumed that an optimum solution can be found; if it is not, then it is the procedure which is at fault and must be changed.

But an empirical/rational approach would be less suited to a predominantly task culture. Here the prevailing norms focus members' attention less upon structure, formal authority, systematic relationships, functional differentiation, etc. and more upon how people see their situation; how they work in groups; how they operate in situations of uncertainty which demand of them flexibility and creativity; how power and authority are continually shifting as different kinds of expertise are needed.

In this situation there can normally be no straightforward imposition of change from above; most members are considered experts in their own right; the culture demands consultation and collaboration; informal networks and personal relationships are important and cannot be by-passed. Organizations, viewed from this standpoint, are places where people, dealing with their own frustrations, insecurities, and personal needs and ambitions, interact with each other — often in situations which create conflict. Such people act according to their reading of a situation. They form alliances and cliques which may have little in common with formal organizational structures. Along with others in their task or social groups they negotiate and construct their own view of reality and their own social order. For those concerned to bring about change, the choice of strategy must take into account this view of organization. Information, ideas, new ways of working, new attitudes, etc. must penetrate and be accepted into this 'informal' world. Individuals and groups, who are responsible for, and uphold this world, must themselves be identified and changed, perhaps through the use of a normative re-educative change strategy (see p.23).

If the outsider is perceptive in identifying dominant cultural styles he will be in a better position to predict the kinds of attitudes and behaviours insiders will expect of each other and of outsiders who become involved in their affairs. But the matter is further complicated in educational institutions by the influence of subject disciplines.

## SUBJECT DISCIPLINES AND CULTURE

Ever since C.P. Snow put forward the idea of 'The Two Cultures' in a lecture in 1959 there has been an interest in the notion of culture as it applies to different disciplinary groupings. Snow (1965) subsequently modified and extended his ideas but the essence of his argument remained the same. At one cultural pole are literary intellectuals and at the other are scientists, particularly physical scientists.

'Between the two is a gulf of mutual incomprehension — sometimes

> (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. They have a curious distorted image of each other. Their attitudes are so different that, even on the level of emotion, they can't find much common ground. Non-scientists tend to think of scientists as brash and boastful. . . .
>
> 'The non-scientists have a rooted impression that the scientists are shallowly optimistic, unaware of man's condition. On the other hand, the scientists believe that the literary intellectuals are totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men, in a deep sense anti-intellectual, anxious to restrict both art and thought to the "existential moment".' (p.5)

On the meaning of culture Snow continues:

> 'At the one pole, the scientific culture really is a culture not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense. That is, it's members need not, and of course often do not, always completely understand each other . . . but there are common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behaviour, common approaches and assumptions. This goes surprisingly wide and deep. It cuts across other mental patterns, such as those of religion or politics or class . . . without thinking about it, they respond alike. That is what culture means.' (p.10)

The culture of the scientist is incomprehensible to the literary intellectuals who form what Snow calls the 'traditional culture'. He adds: 'It is rather as though, over an immense range of intellectural experience, a whole group was tone-deaf. Except that this tone-deafness doesn't come by nature, but by training, or rather the absence of training.' (p.14)

Another contribution to the idea of disciplinary culture comes from the field of psychology and social psychology. Hudson (1966 and 1968) develops the notion of two different types of schoolboy — convergent and divergent.

The concepts refer to more than just two kinds of thinking, they also involve certain preferences and personality characteristics. The schoolboys, with whom various tests and experiments were carried out, exhibited certain traits. The convergers were more likely to share respect for authority, to be conscientious, to seek more direction in carrying out their work and to be happier in learning situations which provided exactitude and 'from which both muddle and emotion have largely been removed'. The divergers, on the contrary, were more independent, were less constrained by authority, were tolerant of ambiguity and preferred subjects which were less precise.

The boys specializing in the physical sciences supported the view that science graduates could be described as: liking precise, logical argument; disliking discussion of personal emotional matters; having practical and mechanical hobbies; and being happier dealing with things than with people. Furthermore these boys showed a strong tendency to identify themselves with the same traits. Another group of boys specializing in arts subjects agreed

with a stereotype of an arts graduate, which had opposite traits to those of the science graduate, and also identified themselves with those characteristics.

Hudson expresses some caution over interpreting the results and suggests that to think in 'binary terms' may prove to be a 'gross oversimplification'. But even so he has indicated that from an early age children hold fairly firm views about differences in how 'the two cultures behave'. There is also some evidence from Hudson's work to suggest that those who are moving (or in Hudson's view 'being squeezed') in one direction or the other are already preparing themselves to accept the norms and values of their seemingly pre-destined cultures.

Whether the patterns, procedures and norms of a disciplinary group emerge from the nature of the disciplines themselves, or from the psychological or social characteristics of those who choose to join them, or from the growth of norms and values within the groups over time is less important in the present context than the fact that differences do appear to exist and that these differences are particularly pronounced between arts and science subjects.

But are there not more than two cultures? Snow (op. cit.) defended his binary notion for some time but was eventually forced to admit the existence of a third culture.

> 'This body of opinion seems to come from intellectual persons in a variety of fields — social history, sociology, demography, political science, economics, government (in the American academic sense), psychology, medicine and social arts such as architecture. It seems a mixed bag: but there is an inner consistency. All of them are concerned with how human beings are living or have lived — and are concerned not in terms of legend, but of fact. I am not implying that they agree with each other, but in their approach to cardinal problems — such as the human effects of the scientific revolution, which is the fighting point of this whole affair — they display, at the least, a family resemblance.' (p.71)

Snow sees the third group as eventually providing a link between science and literature but the particular characteristics of the culture are not specifically dealt with. Other writers, however, have taken the question of disciplinary culture further, either because they have been faced with a situation in which they have been required to work with people from mixed disciplinary backgrounds, and have found the task extremely difficult, or because they have perceived the topic of considerable importance to their own research.

Becher (1981), following interviews with over 100 academics in six disciplines in the United Kingdom and the United States, sets out some preliminary findings which suggest the existence of strong and persistent stereotypes. Individuals in each of the disciplines were asked about each of the other disciplines. The responses suggest that historians are generally regarded as 'scholarly, committed, patient and well-ordered'. Their reliance

on documentation however is condemned as excessive and 'their lack of effort to apply their findings to the present or the future is written down as esoteric and escapist.'

Physics was recognized as the 'extreme pure science — precise, clearly defined, dealing in pure ideas' but with 'little relevance to everyday life'.

Biologists were regarded as patient experimenters, somewhat ethereal but committed and hardworking. The discipline is seen as highly descriptive and as a 'sort of watered down physics'.

Sociology was widely condemned as 'fragmented and pseudo-scientific, dubious in its methodoloy and open to ideological exploitation'. Sociologists are held to be 'woolly in their thinking, dubious in their ability, prone to overgeneralise — perhaps predictably — jargon laden and inarticulate.'

Lawyers are perceived as not really academics. They are seen as — 'arcane, distant and alien: an appendage to the academic world'. The discipline is described as 'unexciting, uncreative and comprising a series of intellectual puzzles scattered among large areas of description'.

These are stereotypes, and by their nature they are found to contain much that is prejudicial, inconsistent and incorrect. But the outsider should be aware of them. He will face situations in which representatives from the various groups meet each other to discuss change. Their reactions to each other will be coloured by their view of the other cultures and how the members of such groups might be expected to think and behave. That there is mutual mistrust and sometimes hostility between the various cultures is generally accepted. Disciplinary integrity is regarded by members of the various cultures as highly important: defences are built and carefully maintained. Hudson (1980), considering psychology, describes the situation in terms of 'disciplinary space' as follows:

> 'What defines the space positively, is a concern with what goes on inside the human head; what defines the space more negatively is the existence, all round it, of other disciplines, each of which threatens to pre-empt the ground on which the psychologist wishes to stand: human physiology, animal behaviour, anthropology, sociology, history, psychiatry, philosophy, machine intelligence, cybernetics and so on. In practice then, psychology is a discipline, defined in a series of border wars, in which the home team fights off the depredations of the sociologist here, the biologist there — a skirmishing that creates boundaries, which in their turn must be patrolled.' (p.11)

Sloman (1975) describes the problems of trying to establish and maintain an interdisciplinary programme in cognitive studies.

> 'There are many difficulties with the new programme. Psychologists and Social Scientists who have been indoctrinated to think that Science requires the collection of numerical data by "objective" methods, cannot easily accept the relevance of conceptual analysis as practised by philosophers in their armchairs or seminar methods used by linguists to articulate their own implied knowledge of their native language.

> Philosophers, on the other hand, are afraid of treading on the toes of empirical scientists and thus tend to concentrate on an excessively narrow and often arid range of problems. Linguists fear that the intrusion of psychological questions about meaning or understanding will deprive the subject of its "autonomy". All tend to be afraid of computing, and many mistakenly regard it as essentially concerned with numerical calculations. . . . Lecturers tend to be too busy with teaching and administration . . . to be able to learn about new disciplines or new approaches. Departmental attitudes . . . lead people to mix up intellectual and educational problems with political issues about growth of departments.' (p.8)

But stereotypes are not enough for the adviser intent on introducing change: he must also attempt to understand the host culture through the eyes of the insider. Becher (1981a) explores the perceptions which members have of their own culture.

Physicists, for instance, share a belief in the 'unity and simplicity of nature'. A study of the discipline helps the physicist to understand 'profound simplification and gain a sense of harmony and structure'. This shared belief is 'related to the contention that, in the end, everything is understandable: even in apparently intractable areas, someone will eventually come along with a theory which will make things fall neatly into place.'

Historians, by contrast, see their discipline as being primarily concerned with understanding 'how things come about' rather than with 'producing solutions to problems.' 'Arguments tend to be conducted in substantive rather than structural terms: people are quite prepared to quarrel about the evidence, but there are seldom major disputes about methodology.'

This offers further support for the view that academics from different subject backgrounds will approach issues and questions — including the question of educational change — from quite different standpoints. Additional evidence in this respect, but concerned with secondary schooling, is provided by Ball (1981). This study focused upon the problem of mixed-ability teaching in a comprehensive school. Ball noted the existence of distinct subject sub-cultures within the school. Teachers were sensitive to what they regarded as the maintenance of 'good practice' within their subject and this practice was closely associated with the nature of the discipline itself. Within subject sub-cultures such as modern languages, maths and science there was an unwillingness to adapt or compromise the subject and its implicit standards to the demands of the innovation (mixed ability teaching). By contrast humanities teachers seemed to form a sub-culture which was more 'child-centred' than 'subject-centred'. They were unwilling to subordinate the needs of the child to the demands of the subject and, to them, mixed ability teaching was a move towards providing 'real', comprehensive education.

The problem raised by differing disciplinary cultures is particularly apparent when attempts are made to bring subjects together to create inter-

disciplinary courses. A great many such courses were introduced into universities and polytechnics in the 1970s and their progress and problems provided a focus of study for the Nuffield Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education. Several case studies indicated just how difficult it was to overcome the cultural distinctions between disciplines which affect all aspects of interdisciplinary curriculum development (GRIHE 1975a).

What then are the implications for an educational adviser of disciplinary differentiation of the kind suggested above? Perhaps the most important lesson that will be learned from a study of disciplinary cultures is that each department will tend to regard the outsider in a different light, to expect different things from him and to react differently to the things that are said or done by the outsider group. The diplomatic outsider will learn the value of applying different approaches, at different times, of 'tuning in' to the unspoken norms of a particular group, and of using a language which is understandable by and acceptable to the 'client'. But the problems of cultural differentiation are sometimes accentuated when the outsider is called upon to work with several cultures at the same time.

Bligh (1978), faced with the problem of providing courses on teaching for university lecturers, became acutely aware of the different expectations and assumptions held by those from different disciplines. The physical and applied sciences, he maintains, generally work within paradigms of high mathematical content, accepted facts and theories and clearly defined structure; the biological medical subjects rely upon a great deal of factual information but have less theory than the physical sciences to synthesize it; the social sciences involve large bodies of information and abound in theories, many of which are untested or untestable, but there is a general expectation that philosophical underpinnings will be the subject of much critical analysis; and in most arts subjects subjective opinions are encouraged, there is emphasis upon linguistic expression rather than mathematical calculation, and lecturers are used to stimulating imagination rather than presenting established truths.

Broad as these generalizations are they do point to the possibility of considerable variation in what different audiences will find acceptable as evidence, what will convince and what will lead to rethinking and change. To illustrate the problem faced by an adviser charged with the task of helping lecturers improve their teaching, Bligh draws two stereotypes of participants in a new faculty introductory course.

> 'Mr Martin has been appointed as a lecturer in a literary subject. It is a basic assumption of his discipline that the written or spoken word can stimulate emotive reactions. The authors and works he has studied do this pre-eminently. . . . His contributions to discussion at a course for new lecturers rely on appeals to common experience. . . .
>
> 'He diverts discussion with untestable generalisation, and when challenged, raises new hares to be chased. He is unpractised numerically

and distrusts statistics because he cannot understand them, but articulately defends the rationalisation invented to cover his fear. Hence at the introductory course for new lecturers he is predisposed to reject empirical findings in education which may conflict with his presuppositions. (p.24)

'Dr Johnson is a new lecturer in one of the dogmatic sciences. . . . He expects educational issues to have a more clearly defined structure than they have. Consequently he is prone to think that he is getting very little out of a course for new lecturers and that "Education is a load of waffle." In sharp contrast to Mr Martin, he looks for truth external to himself, but he is unlikely to accept any "truths" offered when he is unfamiliar with the method by which they have been obtained. He is unhappy with the uncertainty of education, and unsettled by the absence of any agreed paradigm of inquiry.

'. . . Unlike Mr Martin who despises teaching factual information, Dr Johnson sees this as his job and feels he is expected to know all aspects of his subject . . . he now focuses on the quantitative data given in the new lecturers' course, regardless of its educational implications and importance.' (p.25)

The assumptions and expectations illustrated in the above examples stem from the influence of disciplinary cultures. They are related to the way in which members of subject groupings see things and do things. There are many such cultures, and for the outsider to communicate with the separate groups successfully (that is, in a way which will make educational change possible) he must, in Bligh's words, 'learn to speak with many tongues. . . . The same sentence given to a mixed audience will mean different things to different members.'

So far the examples provided depict disciplines as relatively unified cultures exhibiting certain predictable traits. To the extent that this is true, it is valuable information for the adviser. But it will sometimes be found that as well as unifying factors there are also internal divisions. It is not, simply, that some departments are made up of representatives of several sub-cultures (archeology for instance may well have historians, geologists, chemists and statisticians working alongside each other) but that seemingly unitary disciplines are themselves divided according to specialism. Startup (1979), following a study of four university departments, points to some of the differences which arise from this basic division in the sciences:

'Therefore, the research components of the academic roles of the two types of scientist are necessarily different. In particular there must be some influence upon the activity of the applied scientists flowing from social relationships which link him to the practical activity of society generally. Though the academic pure scientist is made independent of the external world (and is thus, in a sense parasitical upon it), the

academic applied scientist is essentially dependent upon the external world (and he is thus inevitably a creature of it).' (p.91)

The differentiation, however, is not merely a division between, say, engineering subjects and so-called pure science subjects: it extends into the subjects themselves. Becher (1981a), analysing physics as a disciplinary culture, points to major divisions stemming from a theoretical as opposed to an experimental orientation.

'Within any particular branch of the subject, the two groups may be closely interdependent, accepting the same underlying principles. Nevertheless, they are trained differently, work in different ways and have divergent interests. . . . There is often a sense of mutual rivalry (illustrated in the comment that the experimentalists "have to produce the meat which the theoreticians then pick"). There are further differences within each broad category. The design of experiments may call for very different talents from the exploitation of apparatus. Again, axiom theorists, working at a level of abstraction far removed from experimental results, can be clearly distinguished from phenomenologists, who start with the experimental data and try to fit mathematical formulae to them, so generating plausible hypotheses for further theoretical or experimental investigation.' (p.2)

Hudson (1980), examining the position of psychology as a discipline, maintains that much of the real excitement in the subject lies at the boundary rather that the heartland of the discipline. The discipline, he continues, will tend to become a polyglot with:

'those facing one particular part of the boundary having much more in common, intellectually, with outsiders who work just on the far side of it than they do with other insiders whose energies are addressed elsewhere.' (p.11)

This segmentation if disciplines offers an important clue to the outsider seeking to understand groups of insiders. In many discipline areas he will find one or more splits seperating academics into distinct and sometimes hostile camps. Such divisions can clearly be seen in economics, psychology, history, sociology, social anthropology, geography, etc., as well as in the science subjects referred to by Startup and Becher (op. cit.).

Bucher and Strauss (1961), following a study of specialisms in the medical profession, suggest that segmentation owes a great deal not only to focus of interest but also to ways of viewing problems and the methodological approaches adopted for solving them. In other words the unity which is provided by common field of study or subject area may be divided by differences in the way those associated with the subject define and approach the problems involved.

This suggests that there may be other factors operating which provide a common perspective for certain groups and that a discipline may contain one or more such perspectives. But what are those perspectives and how are they derived? Are they based purely upon methodological approaches or are the

methodologies in turn dependent upon underlying values? Clearly these are not straightforward questions but the outsider who seeks to understand and influence groups who adhere to particular ways of seeing and doing things cannot afford to ignore them. The problems involved in identifying these perspectives are explored in the next chapter.

## SUMMARY

An outsider intent on bringing about change will have to operate at various levels in seeking to understand the culture into which he seeks to introduce change. Overall, the organization with which he is concerned may tend towards the acceptance of a certain kind of management style which affects the way in which control over members is exercised and the way in which they are formally required to relate to each other. But there may also be variations in management styles between departments which have different functions — administration and teaching units representing one obvious division.

In educational institutions the matter is further complicated by the fact that subject disciplines tend to create their own cultures. At one level the nature of the subject itself engenders a set of ideas and methods, the adoption of which causes subject specialists to think and act in relatively similar ways. But disciplines are continuously evolving and they themselves segment, and spawn separate groups which develop their own identities.

A single department within an institution may, through a deliberate policy of selection, have only one (or, at least, only one dominant) culture or it may have several. Chemistry for instance, may, at first sight, appear a unitary culture but further study may well indicate different orientations between those concerned with organic and those concerned with inorganic chemistry. The adviser must be aware of these internal divisions and of allegiances to other professional groups which some specialists may have outside their own disciplinary cultures.

Overall, there are many interrelated factors which contribute towards the making of a culture. The adviser can rarely hope to understand them all but that is not what he seeks to do. His main concern is to identify those aspects of the culture which will enable him to devise the most appropriate change strategy.

5

# PERSPECTIVES AND PARADIGMS

Black and Ogborn (1977), writing about educational innovation, describe the difficulties faced by a 'teaching methods working party':

> 'Discussions in it soon reveal deep differences about almost every matter at almost every level, from the vital need for rigour as opposed to the need to consider students' views, reactions and problems, to differences about how, when and what to teach. Passionately held positions are struck and defended, at least for the duration of the meeting. There is no prospect that deep and real differences can be explored and reconciled within the time span available. . . . So the working party papers over the cracks, and in the name of academic freedom leaves it to the staff who will actually do the teaching to interpret things in their own way.' (p.151)

This situation is likely to occur whenever educational issues are debated by academics. It typifies the kind of problem facing the adviser and the outsider group. It is not a problem which is easily dealt with. It involves questioning the deeply held values and assumptions which underpin the positions taken by colleagues and there is a natural tendency to shy away. But if the outsiders are to understand the insiders with whom they seek to work and also develop a coherent policy and an effective strategy in order to bring about change, avoidance of the issue is an unsatisfactory solution — the challenge has to be faced. The outsiders must attempt to trace the roots of their own and the insiders' positions, and if an investigation of this kind is carried out it will usually reveal certain assumptions which individuals hold, sometimes unconsciously, about the nature of education — what it is for, how it should be controlled, the kind of processes involved and how it should be studied. Such assumptions and the values which are usually associated with them are seldom free-floating — people do not simply hold views about education in isolation — they are part of a more general value system which supports the positions which individuals hold about a range of social situations and processes. In other words, a position taken on educational issues will often be supported by those same values and assumptions which a person uses to view and judge many other situations.

What the adviser therefore needs is some way of identifying, categorizing and understanding such positions and the values and assumptions which underpin them. This seems, on the face of it, an extremely difficult task involving a study of philosophical, sociological and political perspectives as well as a vast range of methodological approaches to

the study of society and societal processes. Theorists such as Dahrendorf (1959), Gouldner (1970), Strasser (1976), R.J. Bernstein (1976), Benton (1977) and Paulston (1976) have attempted to bring some conceptual order into this area of inquiry by analysing, comparing and contrasting many of the theories and methodologies found within the social sciences. R.J. Bernstein (op. cit. 1976), for example, in *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* takes as a starting point 'empirical theory', demonstrates how this field of inquiry has been attacked from various standpoints, particularly linguistic analysis, and illustrates how 'phenomenology' and 'critical theory' offer alternatives. Paulston (op. cit. 1976) is concerned primarily with large-scale educational change and seeks to distinguish different approaches and their implications under two broad headings — 'the equilibrium paradigm' and 'the conflict paradigm'.

A more recent analysis, by Burrell and Morgan (1979), suggests that four broad paradigms of inquiry can be identified — functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist — and that all writers and theorists on societal issues can be located within one or another of these paradigms. The scheme has two main advantages in the present context. It is comprehensive enough to take account of the many influences which have impinged upon the study of education and it identifies and explains the main values and assumptions which locate the paradigms.

The scheme involves the identification of paradigms which the authors define as follows:

> 'We regard our four paradigms as being defined by very basic meta-theoretical assumptions which underwrite the frame of reference, mode of theorising and modus operandi of the social theorists who operate within them. It is a form which is intended to emphasise the commonality of perspective which binds the work of a group of theorists together in such a way that they can be usefully regarded as approaching social theory within the bounds of the same problematic.' (p.23)

The authors thus adopt and extend the notion of paradigm suggested by Kuhn (1970) in his analysis of the structure of scientific revolutions.

The adviser who seeks to influence others will have to look in several directions in order to identify those perspectives which are likely to affect the educational change process. He will need to understand the position of those insiders with whom he might work; he will want to appreciate the perspectives of his fellow outsiders and he will accept the importance of understanding his own standpoint. In connection with this last point Burrell and Morgan suggest that:

> 'In order to understand alternative points of view it is important that a theorist is fully aware of the assumptions upon which his own perspective is based. Such an appreciation involves an intellectual journey which takes him outside the realm of his own familiar domain. It requires that he become aware of the boundaries which define his perspective. It requires that he journey into the unexplored. It requires

that he become familiar with paradigms which are not his own. Only then can he look back and appreciate in full measure the precise nature of the starting point.' (p.xi)

In the following pages a journey of the kind suggested above is made. It is essentially a rapid 'mapping' tour intended to indicate the main influences upon educational ideas and practices and the values which underpin them.

## A SCHEME FOR ANALYSING PERSPECTIVES

Burrell and Morgan suggest that two major dimensions can be identified in debates about social inquiry. The first of these is an amalgam of several intellectual strands which together form a dimension stretching from what might be called 'subjectivism' to 'objectivism'. The strands which make up the dimension are as follows:

i The ontological strand, particularly the debate on nominalism v. realism. Nominalism assumes that the social world external to the individual is made up of no more than names which are artificial creations used to make sense of the world but in no way giving it a real structure. Realism on the other hand accepts a social world of hard, tangible and relatively immutable structures.

ii The epistemological strand, particularly the debate on anti-positivism v. positivism. Positivism, in this context, represents an approach to knowledge which seeks to understand the social world through identifying regularities and causal relationships. Knowledge in this domain offers proofs and identifies truth and falsity. Anti-positivism is essentially relativisitic and suggests that the social world can only be understood from the frame of reference of those directly involved in the activities which are being studied.

iii The 'human nature' strand, particularly the debate on voluntarism v. determinism. The debate is concerned with the nature of man. At one extreme his actions are seen to be completely determined by his environment, at the other he is assumed to exercise free will: he acts rather than behaves.

iv The methodological strand, particularly the ideographic v. nomethetic debate. The ideographic approach adopts methodologies which will reveal subjective views and allow the nature and characteristics of social situations or processes to unfold during the inquiry. The nomethetic approach is more akin to methods used in natural sciences, including, for instance, hypotheses formation, experimental testing, quantitative techniques and statistical analysis of data.

The subjective-objective dimension can thus be set out as in Figure 5 (Burrell and Morgan 1978, p.3).

Each strand is conceptually separate but in so far as each fits into the subjectivist v. objectivist categories there are good reasons for combining them.

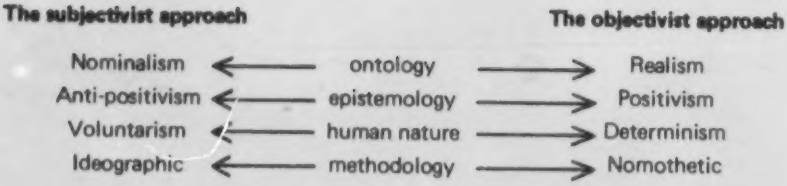


*Figure 5 The subjective-objective dimension*

The two categories can be linked to two major socio-philosophical traditions and within each tradition there is some consistency in the adoption of assumptions and approaches related to each of the four strands. Thus the intellectual tradition which is most representive of the objective end of the dimension is 'sociological positivism'. According to Burrell and Morgan:

> '. . . this reflects the attempt to apply models and methods derived from the natural sciences to the study of human affairs. It treats the social world as if it were the natural world, adopting a "realist" approach to ontology. This is backed by a positivistic epistemology, relatively 'deterministic' views of human nature and the use of "nomethetic" methodologies.' (p.7)

In opposition to this view, at the subjective extreme of the dimension, is 'German Idealism':

> 'In essence it is based upon the premise that the ultimate reality of the universe lies in "spirit" or "idea" rather than in the data of sense perception. It is essentially nominalist in its approach to social reality. In contrast to the natural sciences, it stresses the essentially subjective nature of human affairs, denying the utility and relevance of the models and methods of natural science to studies in this realm.' (p.7)

Burrell and Morgan are by no means alone in distinguishing these two extreme traditions. In sociology, social anthropology and social philosophy both are well recognized and much debated: see for instance Kienzle (1970), Gouldstein (1968), Weeks (1973) and Berger and Luckman (1971).

To the first dimension Burrell and Morgan add a second, regulation v. radical change. This also relates to a much debated issue and is prominent in the work of, for instance, Lockwood (1956) and Dahrendorf (1959). The intellectual tradition associated with regulation embraces all sociological theories which are primarily concerned to explain society in terms which

emphasize its underlying unity and cohesiveness and the reasons why it is maintained as an entity and holds together rather than falls apart. Theories of radical change, which fall at the other end of the dimension, are concerned with explanations for deep-seated conflict, modes of domination and structural contradictions which theorists who adopt this position see as characterizing modern society.

Burrell and Morgan intersect the two dimensions, subjective-objective and regulation-radical change, and so produce a matrix which locates four paradigms as in Figure 6 (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p.22).

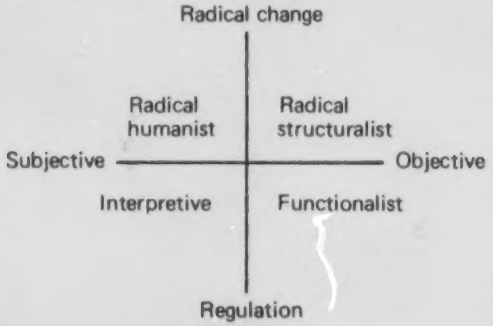


*Figure 6 Paradigms of social analysis*

At the bottom right of the matrix is the functionalist paradigm which brings together the notions of objective reality and stable social institutions. To the left is the interpretive paradigm which incorporates the views of writers who accept regulation and stability in social affairs but reject the idea of objectivity, especially when applied to social phenomena. Above, on the left, is the radical humanist paradigm which is adopted by those who deny both objectivity and social regulation. In this paradigm writers are concerned with the need for, or inevitability of, radical change. To the right is the radical structuralist grouping which again suggests inevitable radical change but accepts the notion of an objective social reality.

The implications will next be considered for educational research and practice of the values and assumptions associated with each paradigm. But before doing so two points should be noted. First, because of the structure of the scheme, particularly the subjective-objective dimension, which is made up of four strands, it is possible to locate on the 'map' philosophical, ideological, epistemological and methodological perspectives. Secondly, it will be argued that the functionalist paradigm has been, and still is, dominant in the field of education. Within this paradigm it is relatively easy to identify not only important values and assumptions but also the practices which they underpin. This is less easy to do in the other paradigms which

contribute either an alternative perspective from which to view education (the interpretive paradigm) or radical critiques (the radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigm). The exploration of the paradigms will therefore start with a consideration of the roots of what from now on will be called the traditional-functionalist paradigm, and of its relevance for education. This will be followed by a review of the influence of the other three paradigms on the traditional-functionalist position.

## THE TRADITIONAL-FUNCTIONALIST PARADIGM

The functionalist paradigm developed as a branch of the natural sciences and owes much to the work of Auguste Comte and his ideas on scientific rationality. Emile Durkheim further contributed to this school of thought through empirical research and the development of such concepts as social facts, functions and structures, and mechanical and organic solidarity. Other writers, including, for instance, Selznick (1943), Rice (1963) and Katz and Kahn (1966), have since adopted a similar approach, in which societies or organizations are viewed as systems, having goals, functions, structures, means of self-regulation and boundaries, across which interactions (the exchange of inputs and outputs) take place. Such systems are always regarded as having an underlying stability and equilibrium.

If the assumptions and values, which together create this paradigm, are applied to education, certain consequences follow. The pheonomena studied will be seen to have an objective reality. The methods used in the natural sciences for the generation of hypothesis, testing and measurement will be adopted to analyse the educational process and to construct explanatory models or theories. Each part of the education system will be analysed in terms of its goals, structure, function and the inter-relationship of its parts. Overall, the system will be regarded as a stable entity which will deal with change within itself through the modification of its parts and their relationships to each other.

Examples of the introduction of this approach into the field of education are numerous. The most widely known is instructional or educational technology which provides an approach to the problems of teaching, learning and curriculum development based upon a systematic, deductive mode of analysis and design. A typical model, showing the important feedback loops characteristic of this approach, is suggested by Popham and Baker (1970 p.17) and shown here in Figure 7.

A reiteration of the basic principles underlying this position is provided by Hirst (1980) in a paper entitled 'The logic of curriculum development'. He maintains that curriculum decisions are concerned with a programme of intentional, deliberately planned activities and enshrined in this definition is the notion that these activities are planned so that certain objectives will be reached. A curriculum is only rationally definable in so far as the choice of objectives and the means of achieving these objectives can be justified.

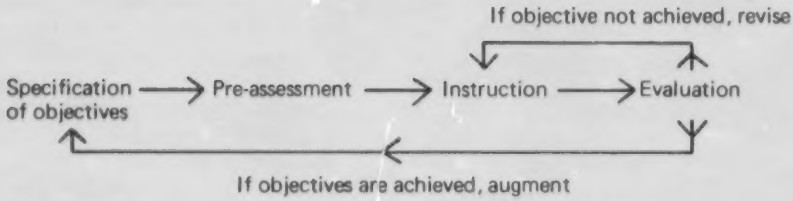


*Figure 7 A goal referenced instructional model*

The assumptions implied in the functionalist approach have provided the underpinnings for a great many educational activities, ranging from rational, quantitative approaches to planning, policy making and budgeting to stimulus-response methods of designing learning programmes. Within the range would be included: output budgeting (eg DES 1970); cost-benefit analysis (eg Hansen 1963); cost-effectiveness analysis (eg Layard and Oatey 1973); educational productivity measurement (Woodhall and Blaug 1967); input-output analysis (Burkhead et al. 1967); organizational analysis (eg Rice 1970); educational programme or project appraisal based upon statistical correlations (eg NFER 1970); curriculum design models (eg Tyler 1950); self-paced instructional programmes (Keller 1965); computer assisted learning (Hooper 1978); learning materials design schemes (Gerlach 1966); and, generally, all of those approaches which fall under the heading 'educational technology'. The common characteristics are: an attempt to specify programme or learning objectives; a set of procedures whereby objectives are made operational; an evaluation scheme whereby outcomes are measured against objectives; and a feedback loop which links the evaluation results to objectives and procedures.

A recent and important source of support for this approach comes from the Technician Educational Council (TEC). This body is responsible for the re-organization of technician education throughout the United Kingdom and through its validation procedures members are able to influence, to a considerable extent, the process of course design. A major element of TEC's approach is that the specification of objectives should form the basis of courses submitted to them for approval. The following extract is taken from TEC(1975) Guidance Note No. 1

'The Use of Objectives

1) The Council, after consultations with its Programme Committees, has decided that its aim will be that in due course all programme units should be written in the form of general and specific learning objectives. The advantages of this format have been set out in Circular TEC 6/75 . . .

3) Work has proceeded on the writing of all standard units in objective format. A standardised approach to objective writing has been adopted, all objectives starting with a verb describing learning performance and being qualified by an object and constraints . . .

4) As a basis for assessment and an aid to validation, objectives have been considered as falling into three categories, related to the form of learning involved. These categories are known as the psychomotor, affective and cognitive domains. These can essentially be summarized as practical skills, attitude changes and intellectual skills.'

The functionalist perspective has been, and probably still is, one of the most powerful influences in education and educational change. The values and assumptions upon which it is based suggest a rational, systematic, objective approach to solving educational problems. Because its adherents assume an underlying system it is possible to construct a model of inter-relationships between different parts of the system and analyse and predict the effect which changes in one part will have upon the rest.

The majority of pure and applied science subjects and certain schools of thought within the social sciences incorporate these assumptions within their disciplinary frameworks. Also, as has already been suggested, many approaches to curriculum evaluation and curriculum development adopt similar assumptions.

But the perspectives from the other three paradigms are different. Together they challenge the traditional-functionalist approach and suggest alternative ways of viewing educational issues. Together they have influenced the traditional 'ideology' and drawn it towards the other paradigms. In the process these have created a number of distinctive perspectives characterized by a wide range of theory and 'internal' debate. The traditional and modified functionalist positions can again be illustrated by reference to a 'map' (Figure 8).

The 'map' indicates the thrust of competing ideas from adjoining paradigms and the location of resultant 'grey' border areas surrounding the traditional-functionalist base. These areas will now be considered, but instead of trying to define them precisely their flavour will be sampled by examining the philosophies, values, methodologies and practices which the alternative perspectives have brought to the traditional-functionalist paradigm. The writers themselves are less important in this respect than the ideas which they have put forward at certain times in certain contexts. Thus it is not always necessary to associate a particular educational writer or practitioner entirely, or unreservedly, with any one area of the 'map'.

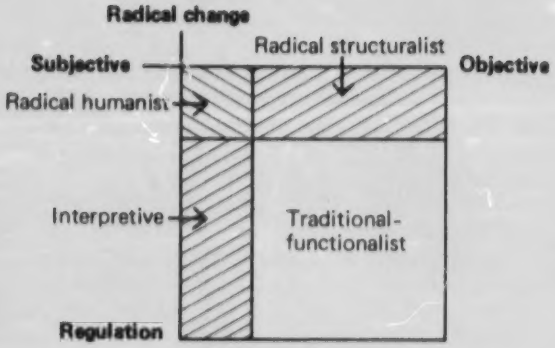


*Figure 8* *Traditional and modified functionalist perspectives*

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

The interpretive paradigm stems from a rejection of positivist thought and the acceptance of Emmanuel Kant's view that reality lies in 'spirit' or 'idea' rather than data collected through the senses. Writers within this paradigm accept the view that social reality is largely the product of human consciousness and subjective experience. The social world can only be understood by adopting the standpoint of the actor, which means drawing out, or 'tapping' in some way subjective experience and interpreting it. There are, within the paradigm, many divergent views on how this would be done.

Phenomenology offers one approach: it is both a philosophy and a broad methodological approach to social research. Edmund Husserl provided the general philosophical direction by questioning the common sense, taken-for-granted attitudes of everyday life, particularly the view that there is an objective external world which exists in space and time, independently of human consciousness, that is real for all men. That men believe in this objective world is regarded as a form of 'complicity' and such complicity needs to be examined in order to understand the social world.

In general, the view taken by theorists located within the paradigm is that a study of social processes cannot be carried out in the same way as a study of natural pheonomena. People create their own meanings and act accordingly: they do not simply behave in ways determined by general laws. To understand such meanings and actions it is necessary to interpret the minds of the actors concerned and to see the world from their perspective.

How might this view of social reality be applied to education? Primarily it would tend to direct attention away from systems, structures and objectives towards the perceptions of learners and how and why they attach meaning to the messages they receive. In practical terms it might suggest greater emphasis on how students actually learn rather than upon how lecturers devise learning systems. A course influenced by these ideas would probably by learner- rather than teacher-centred. John Dewey, writing in 1938, for example, draws together a number of principles implicit in the so-called progressive education movement and these could be seen in an interpretive light. He states:

> 'If one attempts to formulate the philosophy of education implicit in the practices of the new education, we may, I think, discover certain common principles amid the variety of progressive schools now existing. To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world.' (Dewey 1938 p.20)

These ideas were at the heart of developments in some (progressive) British primary schools in the 1960s. They are also not entirely new to higher education, where many lecturers would subscribe to them in principle. In the 1970s, for instance, the idea of independence in learning became a focus of interest and sometimes experiment in higher education (see, for example, Dressel and Thompson 1973 and GRIHE 1975). Behind the ideas and discussion was the belief that students should take the major share of responsibility for their own education: they should make their own decisions about what should be studied, how learning should be organized and supported and how their work should be assessed. Highly innovatory schemes were proposed by groups of enthusiasts in some institutions. These ran the gauntlet of critical scrutiny by less committed colleagues but two which survived and eventually became independent study programmes — at the University of Lancaster and at North East London Polytechnic — are described by Percy and Ramsden (1980). The originators of the scheme at Lancaster suggested an alternative to the traditional degree programme:

> 'The idea of the independent route is to help the student to become self-sufficient as a learner: teaching is needed less and less as he gains experience and confidence (p.35) (and) . . . the notion of "staff" setting work, "students" doing it and "staff" assessing it and handing it back, and the "student" putting it away, would be one academic tradition that could hopefully be lost.' (p.34)

A document produced by the School of Independent Studies at North East London Polytechnic also expressed the belief that students should play a

major part in deciding their own education:

> 'The function of the School is to help people define their intellectual, social and personal needs within the context of our particular philosophy of education, and then to assist them achieve their goals. This is done by a "problem-centred" approach to learning — that is by encouraging students, either as a group or as individuals, to formulate problems, propose solutions and then put them into practice to test them.' (p.13)

Both of these schemes, despite some modifications and compromises necessary to meet organizational and other practical constraints, are reminders that the influence of the interpretive paradigm can sometimes result in practical alternatives to traditional teaching programmes.

An intermediate position, resulting from the interaction of functionalist and interpretive ideas and values, can also be identified in the 'action frame of reference'. The foundation of this position can be traced to Max Weber who was dissatisfied with the superficialities which he regarded as characterizing positivistic explanations of society and was also greatly concerned with the subjective and 'unscientific' nature of 'idealist thought'. His solution to this problem produced a hybrid position which has since been adopted by other writers such as Goffman (1959), Berger and Luckman (1964), Silverman and Jones (1976) and Strauss (1978).

Those who write from this standpoint regard the relationship between society and/or organizations and the individual as interactive. Roles and institutional patterns are not seen as determining the behaviour of the individual but as providing a general framework in which social life is acted out. The individual has an important and creative part in forming and changing this framework. A useful illustration of the position can be found in the notion of 'negotiated order' which Day (1977) explains as follows:

> 'In the case of negotiated order theory, the individuals in organizations play an active, self-conscious role in the shaping of social order. Their day-to-day interactions, agreements, temporary refusals and changing definitions of the situations at hand are of paramount importance. Closely correlated is the perspective's view of social reality . . . the negotiated order theory down-plays the notion of organizations as fixed, rather rigid systems which are highly constrained by strict rules, regulations and goals and hierarchical chains of command. Instead, it emphasizes the fluid, continuously emerging qualities of the organization, the changing web of interaction woven among its members, and it suggests that order is something at which the members of the organization must consistently work.' (p.132)

Strauss (1978) makes it clear, however, that structure plays an important part in the analysis of a situation:

> '. . . nobody espousing a negotiated order perspective has ever ignored structural considerations, has ever taken over uncritically the constructed world of the actors under study. In any event the paradigmatic

certainly takes both actor's viewpoints and structural considerations into account.' (p.251)

Interpretation of a situation through an action position therefore involves an analysis of the relationship between individual, subjective meaning and objective 'reality', which is represented by a framework or structure within which action takes place.

Elliott (1980) points to the links between action research and the action position as applied to curriculum development:

> 'It is no coincidence that action research in classrooms tended to emerge in association with the curriculum development movement in the 1960's and 1970's. Many of the projects which constituted this movement were concerned with shifting the learning context in classrooms from 'memory' and routine 'problem solving' to 'understanding' tasks. Such innovations tended to articulate this shift in terms of ideas like 'self-directed', discovery, and inquiry learning. . . . In its impersonal aspect an objective reality which exists independently of the students' own thinking is disclosed. In its personal aspect this reality can only be personally appropriated by the student as he brings his own cognitive structures to bear on the problem defined by the task.' (p.312)

This illustrates well the underlying action position by stressing the interaction between objective reality and personal perception. If the action frame of reference is applied to course design and teaching students will be encouraged to engage in inquiry, discussion and reflection: general areas of content and not behavioural objectives will provide the direction and teachers will seek to become 'resources' rather than authority figures. The learner will be active in such an approach and there will be a great deal of flexibility. But flexibility is not freedom; it is more a relaxation of constraints. The nature of the subject studied and the authority of the lecturer representing the institution and its norms, values and procedures (of which examinations are an important aspect) provide an objective reality, and action takes place within this framework. The action position is an influential one: it provides the rationale for so-called discovery learning and, in higher education, for the increasing popularity of project work. Projects generally involve some degree of self-direction and discovery but the amount of autonomy available to each student varies according to the constraints imposed by the course structure.

The action frame of reference also embraces a number of research styles, including for instance those adopted by Elliott and MacDonald (1972), Smith and Schumacher (1972), Parlett and Hamilton (1973) and Jenkins (1977). One such style is the illuminative approach which is sometimes used for evaluating courses and programmes. It is contrasted by Parlett and Hamilton (1977) with what they term the 'agricultural botany' type of evaluation which has within it assumptions and values associated with the functionalist paradigm, so that:

'Students, rather like plant crops — are given pre-tests (the seedlings

are weighed and measured) and then submitted to different experiences (treatment conditions). Subsequently, after a period of time, their attainment (growth or yield) is measured to indicate the relative efficiency of the methods (fertilizers) used. Studies of this kind are designed to yield data of one particular type i.e. "objective" numerical data that permit statistical analysis. Isolated variables like I.Q., social class, test scores, personality profiles and attitude ratings are codified and processed to indicate the efficiency of new curricula, media or methods.' (p.11)

In contrast the illuminative approach focuses upon the 'learning milieu' defined as the social-psychological and natural environment in which students and teachers work together. It seeks to analyse a course or programme and interpret:

> 'How it operates; how it is influenced by the various . . . situations in which it is applied; what those directly concerned regard as its advantages and disadvantages; and how students' intellectual tasks and academic experiences are most affected.' (p.13)

The views of participants are important and these are the essential elements of the research but they are interpreted against the complex background of the learning milieu. Individuals are seen as active within, but constrained by, the social system of which they are a part.

These important modifications and extensions of the traditional-functionalist position are represented in Figure 8 (p.53) by the shaded rectangle on the left of the functionalist base. The schools of thought thus located often rely upon values and assumptions very different from those found at the heart of the traditional paradigm but they seldom jettison functionalist views entirely — there is always some degree of acceptance of the structural aspects of the status quo. A more radical view is posed by writers in other pardigms.

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE RADICAL HUMANIST PARADIGM

This paradigm is located towards the subjective end of one dimension and the radical change end of the other. It is concerned with a reality created and sustained by a ('false') human consciousness. Writers who adopt the assumptions which underly this paradigm are concerned with individual liberation: with freedom from socially created psychological bondage.

At the centre of this paridigm is French Existentialism as represented by Jean Paul Sartre. The essential message contained in this philosophy concerns the pathology of alienation. Individuals create their own world by projecting on to it the products of their own consciousness. But their consciousness is distorted and they are trapped and alienated in their world. They are separated through 'bad faith' from their true beings. For Sartre, 'bad faith' arises in situations in which self-imposed constraints are placed upon freedom to think and to act. What has to be fought for is the restoration of good faith, true consciousness, and 'being-for-oneself'. The

individual can only recover these through increased self-consciousness.

The existentialist position, or one close to it, provides the base line for much of the contemporary criticism of education. The ability of human beings to reflect and to learn through directly experiencing the world is hindered rather than helped by education. Students are treated as passive objects to be filled with knowledge — they are 'domesticated' rather than liberated.

Freire (1974) explains the position this way:

> 'Thus, education or cultural action for domestication is bound to divide the consciousness from the world, and to consider the consciousness as an empty space within man which is to be filled with contents. This separation, which results in the consciousness and the world being taken as statically opposed separate entities, implies the negation of the power of reflection of the consciousness, which is transformed into the empty space referred to.' (p.19)

The idea of education creating domestication and passivity is a common one in the critical writings of those supporting this position. Jourard (1967) for instance, examining the notion of independent learning, argues:

> 'Most youngsters, being human, independently learn something meaningful to them; namely, that it is dangerous or futile to become interested in something, to learn for oneself. It is only safe to learn for the teacher or for society's approval. . . .' (p.81)

These views underpinned a broad-ranging critique of the education system in the early 1970s. Writing under the general theme of radical school reform were, amongst others Holt (1971), Goodman (1971), Kohl (1972), Kozol (1971), Postman and Weingarten (1971) and Reimer (1971). Illich should also be mentioned in this context: his work, particularly *Deschooling Society* (Illich 1971), supporting and developing the views of most of the other critical writers. But Illich went much further and marshalled his attack in a way which brought him much closer to the radical structuralist viewpoint and, as such, his ideas will be considered later.

The major criticism of educational institutions from this standpoint is that they are oppressive and de-liberalizing: their uniformity, their compulsory nature, their control over what should be learned and the means of learning it are all factors which prevent, rather than facilitate, learning geared towards the raising of consciousness and self-realization. They deaden rather than enliven the mind. The remedy suggested by those who take this position is an idealistic one — set the learners, or at least their minds, free: a message which Rousseau suggested to educators as far back as 1762.

The ideas embodied in the existentialist position are appealing and exciting but adherents to the ideology are more numerous than practitioners, no doubt because the values and goals implicit in education of this kind usually run counter to the established order. A.S. Neills' Summerhill school is perhaps the nearest to an existentialist experiment that it is possible to

find. His stance is summed up in his statement (Neill 1969):

> 'My view is that a child is innately wise and realistic. If left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, he will develop as far as he is capable of developing.' (p.4)

He continues

> '. . . we set out to make a school in which we should allow children freedom to be themselves. In order to do this, we had to renounce all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction.' (p.4)

Summerhill remains on the fringe of mainstream education, a fee-paying school with a large overseas intake. It offers an example to, but scarcely challenges, the status quo.

The 'free school' movement of the 1960s perhaps offered a greater radical challenge, but in order to succeed such schools, generally catering for working-class children, had to remain outside 'the system'. This in itself guaranteed failure of the movement through lack of resources.

One school, which remained in the mainstream system but which tried to adopt the principles implicit in this approach, published the following aims: a concern to serve primarily the needs of students; the establishment of close student-teacher relationships which foster rather than dampen motivation; a focus upon learning rather than teaching; a high priority accorded to increasing knowledge of the self and the relationship of self to the environment, socially and physically; a concern to foster the development of each individual's unique potential; the creation of a system of internal government, in which every member of staff and of the student body has a part.

These ideas might have been taken from Summerhill: in fact they were derived from a 'General Statement of Position' endorsed by the 'Moot' at Countesthorpe College in 1973 (Watts 1977). A comprehensive school and community college, which opened in 1970, Countesthorpe sought to provide a relatively individualized curriculum for each pupil within a democratic non-repressive environment. Gradually, in the face of considerable difficulty and opposition — mainly from parents, local residents and press — staff were forced to compromise on many of their original principles, and the college, although innovative in many respects, is now much more like a traditional school.

Where ideas from the radical humanist paradigm have penetrated the traditional-functionalist base they have created a new mixture of ideals and principles which co-exist uncomfortably with those more deeply embedded in the paradigm. The small square at the top left hand corner of the paradigm in Figure 8 (p.53) locates this educational 'grey' area. Practitioners associated with this area tend to be regarded by their more conventional colleagues as radical idealists, removed from the mainstream educational system.

## THE INFLUENCE OF RADICAL STRUCTURALISM

Writers located within this paradigm are also concerned with liberation, which can only be brought about by radical change, but because radical structuralism occupies the objective end of the dimension writers accept a social reality which exists independently of human consciousness. Liberation is therefore related to gaining freedom from the bondage created by inbuilt social structures such as class, distribution of wealth, control of factors of production etc. which impose their own domination.

It is generally argued from this position that society is beset by inherent contradictions and is in a perpetual state of actual or potential crisis and conflict. The only change which will provide liberation is radical change in the fabric of society brought about by political action. The paradigm is dominated by the later work of Karl Marx who directed his critique towards an analysis of the contradictory nature of social structures and the part which they play in creating economic and political crises.

It is from a Marxist standpoint that a critique is made of education in capitalist societies, particularly the part which it plays in maintaining the status quo and providing capitalist industry with a 'subservient' work force. Gintis (1973) draws together the argument as follows.

The mode of production determines the educational system. Education is geared to produce and reinforce 'those values, attitudes and affective capacities which allow individuals to move smoothly into an alienated and class-stratified society.'

Schooling, by rewarding the kinds of behaviour required by industry, provides a properly trained labour force and 'takes its place along-side capital accumulation and technological change as a major source of economic growth.' The most important attributes that employers seek are affective ones — personality traits, attitudes, modes of self-presentation and motivation. The school system is aligned to the production system as follows:

> 'First students are rewarded in terms of grades for exhibiting the personality characteristics of good workers in bureaucratic work roles — proper subordinancy in relation to authority. . . . Second, the hierarchical structure of schooling itself mirrors the social relations of industrial production: students cede control over their learning activities to teachers in the class-room. Just as workers are alienated from both the *process* and the *product* of their work, so the student learns to operate efficiently through the external reward of grades and promotion, effectively alienated from the process of education (learning) and its product (knowledge).' (p.30)

The educational system must radically change in order to develop in the individual the capacities for co-operation, struggle, autonomy and judgement. This will involve a redistribution of power: much greater participation by students in decisions concerning their own education and an education geared towards producing individuals capable of operating in an industry under worker control.

In the United Kingdom a Marxist basis for much student protest was diagnosed by Crouch (1970):

> 'If a revolutionary student in Britain is asked to say why he protests, why he uses direct action, why he is continually seeking new demonstrations and confrontations, he is likely to answer in terms that have very little to do with the university as such. He will tell how the working class in Britain has been betrayed by the hierarchy of the Labour Party, how genuine democratic grass-roots activity is ruled out by the machinations of the political system, how Parliamentary and constitutional politics are not a valid weapon with which to combat the overweaning power of capitalism and imperialism.' (p.15)

Protest is also directed at the university as an organization. The demand for greater participation in policy making and decision making, according to Crouch (op. cit. 1970), has two aims. The first is to increase student power and influence over university affairs, the second is to create an organization which offers much greater involvement, personal fulfilment, satisfaction and sense of community.

A Marxist critique, however, is not the only one which is based upon the assumptions and values of the radical structuralist paradigm. Illich (1971) argues that social life and interpersonal behaviour are directed by an institutionalized value system, which he calls 'commodity fetishism', based upon the assumption that all individual needs, whether physical, social, psychological, emotional, spiritual or intellectual can be translated into demands for goods and services. 'Delivery systems' (the suppliers of these goods and services) are large bureaucratic impersonal institutions which treat the consumer as a mere receptor of their commodities. Education plays a dual role in maintaining this system: it is, itself, a delivery system, which, like other such systems, seeks to maintain itself and grow. But it is also a socializing system producing passive manipulable consumers.

To restore in man a dignity based upon independence of thought and community action, society must be deschooled. Schools should be replaced by what Illich calls 'learning webs' which would start with the question: 'What kinds of things and people might learners want to be in contact with in order to learn?'

Common to all critiques associated with the radical structuralist paradigm is the non-acceptance of existing social institutions. Real change, according to those who take this stance, can only be brought about by major reforms, new kinds of institution, and greater power to those whose lives are affected by them. Individuals who argue from this position bring an alternative and usually highly provocative dimension to debates on educational issues. They have seldom produced the revolutionary changes for which they have argued, but their ideas may not have gone entirely unheeded. Some of the values and principles which underpin certain community-based 'educational priority schemes' in the United Kingdom or 'affirmative action projects' in the United States seem to have been derived

from this paradigm.

## SUMMARY

Any group formed for the purpose of bringing about educational change is likely to include individuals holding different positions regarding what needs to be done and how it should be done. These positions are usually based upon firmly held values and assumptions which can be compared and often linked to one of a number of theoretical perspectives or paradigms found in the social sciences. The paradigms and the positions which they generate are summarized below.

The functionalist paradigm is based upon assumptions of objectivity and regulation. The study of social phenomena from this perspective involves rational, deductive modes of analysis. Courses designed on this basis require the specification of aims and objectives and from these are derived programme content, operating procedures and modes of evaluation and feedback. The values implicit in this paradigm provide the underpinnings for most educational activities but the values from other paradigms have influenced and modified the paradigm's traditional base.

The interpretive paradigm has an underlying philosophy which posits a subjective view of social reality whilst at the same time accepting stability and regulation in social affairs. The world only has meaning if viewed as a product of the mind: to understand social reality it is necessary to tap individual subjective experience. Education, approached from this standpoint becomes a process of understanding and facilitating the learning experiences of those involved. For the educational researcher, the task is to elicit and interpret the meaning which participants (teachers, pupils, administrators, etc.) give to particular situations. This position offers an intellectual and philosophical counterpoint to the position derived from the functionalist paradigm. 'The action frame of reference' illustrates well the influence of interpretive values upon the traditional-functionalist paradigm. The relationship between society and the individual is regarded as interactive. Action takes place within a framework, necessarily imposed by the structure of the subject and the authority of the teacher and the institution. There is room for negotiation and flexibility to accommodate the subjective world of the learner but important, objective constraints still remain.

The radical humanist paradigm has many links with the interpretive paradigm but whereas the latter seeks to understand the world from the standpoint of the actor, the former recognizes a pathological alienation in all human beings and seeks radical change to allow individuals to find their 'true' identity. Education from this standpoint is regarded as a major influence causing alienation. The ability of human beings to learn through directly experiencing the world is hindered rather than helped by education: they should be liberated and their minds set free. There was a strong attack on traditional schooling launched by many writers from this position in the

late 1960s and early 1970s.

The radical structuralist paradigm largely stems from a Marxist critique of society. Within this, education is regarded as part of the capitalist superstructure, geared to produce and reinforce values, attitudes and capacities which will allow individuals to move smoothly into an alienated workforce. Schools instil the values of docility and respect for authority and penalize creative and self-initiated behaviour. Educational change must be geared to political change and a new sytem would give to students much greater power in decisions concerning their own education and enable them to take their place in industry under worker control. Another critique focuses upon the role of schools in producing passive, manipulatable consumers, and a de-schooled society is proposed, with an alternative system of education based upon flexible learning networks.

A number of points should be made about the foregoing discussion in order to relate it more closely to the main theme of this monograph — the diplomacy of educational change.

The adviser, in the present context, is cast in the role of a diplomat who operates between outsiders and insiders and seeks to bring change into the working practices of the latter group. In effect he acts as a bridge, spanning, on the one side, certain ideas or procedures which to the insiders represent innovation and, on the other, the cultural norms and traditions which inform and direct the way in which insiders conduct their affairs. To successfully bridge the gap between the two sides the adviser must identify and understand the foundations which support them both. He must recognize and appreciate the underlying values and assumptions which support not only the various host cultures with which he will work but also those which underpin his own position, positions held by his outsider colleagues, and those which lie behind the particular innovations and innovatory strategies proposed. In other words he must be continually aware of any incompatibilities between the positions held by all parties to the innovation and be able to adjust innovative strategies to allow for them.

The adviser will be assisted in this task by a knowledge of the cultural differences between the various insider groups as discussed in Chapter 4. An understanding of the value positions (which often form part of the underlying unity of a culture) held by both insider and outsider groups extends and deepens this knowledge. Statements made by the various parties to an innovation will be more readily understood if the assumptions upon which they are based can be located within a particular paradigm. The adviser can then begin to build up a picture as to how certain individuals or groups might react to particular ideas or approaches. He will also become more sensitive to the assumption he himself is making about the educational practices of the insiders, the kinds of changes which seem necessary, the types of innovation in which the insiders might be interested and the approaches to bringing about change which they might accept.

Advisers might find, for instance, that an innovation based upon a

systems approach to course design (rooted in the values of the traditional-functionalist paradigm) would not easily be accepted by an insider group, such as a course team in a humanities subject, whose position on education and educational change had been much affected by the values inherent in the interpretive paradigm. The reverse situation would also probably hold true. In the next chapter a number of examples are considered which indicate the gaps that can exist between insider and outsider positions, but to end this chapter an amusing but relevant fable is recounted. It illustrates the ludicrous situation which can arise when an extreme traditional-functionalist perspective is applied to the evaluation of an activity normally associated with a quite different set of values. The story is borrowed and much adapted from an anonymous contribution to the Brunel University Bulletin (December 1975).

A progressive education authority once set up an organization and methods advisory unit which visited a school at the request of the head. After an intensive day the officials spent some time in the music department, where they were treated to a performance of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony which the college orchestra had been rehearsing in preparation for a forthcoming festival. The head asked the visitors what they thought of the performance only to be told that they would report to her in due course along with other matters.

Some days later a report was received from the visitors which contained an appendix headed 'Comments on performance of Unfinished Symphony'. It read as follows:

1. We noticed that there were four oboe players, and that they had nothing to do for most of the time. Their number should be reduced and the work load more evenly spread.
2. We also noticed that there were 12 violinists and that they played exactly the same notes. This was quite unnecessarily extravagent; if a greater volume of sound was what was required, this could have been readily achieved by suitable electronic amplification.
3. Much effort seemed to be expended in trying to play demi-semiquavers. The effect was really not commensurate with the effort, and we suggest that in any future performances all notes should be rounded off to the nearest semiquaver.
4. There was much repetition by the horns of passages already played by the violins. This added nothing to the musical ideas which had to be conveyed. If duplication of this type had been avoided, the two-hour concert could have been reduced to 40 minutes.
5. Finally, if the composer himself had attended to such points, he would in all probability have had the time to finish the symphony.'

6

# OUTSIDE INTERVENTION

Some important lessons can be learned from the activities of outsiders, particularly in relation to strategies employed and problems raised when strategy and policy adopted do not prove compatible with the insiders' culture and values. A number of projects, all of which have been described and analysed in the literature on educational change are here reconsidered against ideas put forward in earlier chapters, particularly the change strategies described in Chapter 3 (pp.22-29).

The analysis is not intended to be critical, rather it is concerned to focus upon the very real and considerable problems faced by outsiders in seeking to bring about educational change. The projects have been selected for their illustrative value and they include activities in several sectors of education, including one foreign example. They are all centrally, rather than institutionally, sponsored projects. This is because such projects are generally well documented compared to activities generated entirely within one institution which, normally, do not receive the same publicity. A detailed case study of an institutionally-based programme, however, is included in Chapter 7.

## THE USE OF POWER

The use of power as a strategy to impose educational change implies that outsiders have the means to implement policy and overcome resistance by insiders. Outsiders in this position will normally have some degree of authority over the insiders and hold sanctions by which to influence them.

Berg and Östergren (1977) report a situation which involves the attempted use of power. They describe how the Swedish government in the 1960s, authorized and instructed the use of educational television in a new technological institution specializing in engineering education.

A national organization — the Committee on Television and Radio in Education (TRU) — was already responsible for, and had produced, teaching-learning packages in various mathematical and technological subjects. The materials in each course generally consisted of a number of TV programmes supplemented by other components such as summaries, exercises and examples.

A subcommittee of the Ministry of Education drew up curriculum plans for the new institution and collaborated with TRU over the use of instructional TV. TRU was eventually instructed to produce over 800 half-hour programmes. It was anticipated that the use of TV in this way would

result in substantial savings in teaching costs.

The position of the outsiders was, clearly, based upon functionalist values and these underpinned developments in the 1960s in Sweden, and elsewhere, where the use of educational technology was increasing. The development of the packages was based upon careful research and development. The authors report: 'it was hardly possible for an innovation to adhere more strictly to the so called "research and development model".' Once developed, the materials were introduced into the courses without consultation. Berg and Östergren describe the situation as follows:

> 'The innovation is initiated high up in the hierarchy, the Ministry of Education and its committee U-63. It is determined by parliament which obliged the technological institution in Linköping to arrange instruction through an external organisation, TRU: it is a question of coercion in the pure sense of the word.' (p.100)

But the innovation failed. The host culture proved to be less amenable to the innovation and more powerful in its ability to resist it than the government had foreseen. One of the chief difficulties was that teachers, despite being sympathetic at the start, could not, or would not, use the packages. They complained that they 'bound the instruction so tightly that their own influence became minimal and their role changed dramatically'. The outsiders had ignored a crucial cultural factor — the recognized right of teachers to control the teaching process. However much the teachers may have sympathized with functionalist values and supported the advent of educational technology they were not likely to give up, to an outside body, the right to determine detailed curriculum decisions and teaching, learning and assessment methods.

The TRU were in a difficult position from the start, in that few teachers had been appointed to the new institution when the process of package design began. The fact that teachers were not consulted at all, therefore, added to the alienation which many felt when forced to use 'teacher-proof' materials.

Eventually teachers, students and administrators presented a concerted front to the government which resulted in the withdrawal of the innovation. Interestingly, television usage then revived somewhat as teachers themselves gained control of the innovation.

The case illustrates well the problems which arise through failure to bridge the gap between the position of the outsiders and the values and working practices of the insider. Similar situations have occurred throughout higher and further education in the United Kingdom.

## DIFFUSION STRATEGY

Over a period of five years (1972-1976) a project funded by the Nuffield Foundation (Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education) enabled a small group of researchers to visit all universities and some polytechnics in the United Kingdom. Their immediate purpose was to find

out about innovations taking place in courses and in methods of teaching and learning: their longer-term aim was to stimulate thinking about innovation and encourage experimentation in all areas of the curriculum.

A short preliminary visit was generally made to each institution and subsequently about a week was allowed for the main visit. Members of the group usually had the names of a few people they would like to see before they made their first visit and this list grew longer as the research proceeded. Educational journals and periodicals provided some clues as to who was thinking and writing about educational change but the main guidance was given by a liaison person on each campus. These people were generally chosen by the vice-chancellor or director; they occupied a central position in the organization (eg registrar, planning officer, special assistant to the vice-chancellor or director) and appeared to know virtually everyone who taught on campus and whether or not they were regarded as innovative teachers.

Usually about twenty people, mainly lecturers, were interviewed at each university or polytechnic. They were asked to talk about their work, its problems and the ways in which they had tried to overcome them. Students were also interviewed; increasingly so as the research proceeded and issues of particular concern to them were identified. From this information an attempt was made to identify the main current problems in undergraduate education, as seen by those involved, and the solutions which were being sought. A more detailed account of the group's activities and findings is provided elsewhere (Hewton 1981).

The next step was to report this information back to those who might be influenced by it. A series of newsletters containing details of selected innovations were sent, free, to each institution, mainly via those who had been interviewed. A series of workshops was also organized on selected themes such as interdisciplinarity, assessment, independent learning and small group teaching. Lecturers and students who had indicated a particular interest in these topics were invited. Usually, following these workshops, a booklet was produced analysing the problems which had been identified and the kind of solutions which had been tried. These booklets were then advertised and sold at a small cost. All publications were free of copyright.

What lessons can be learned from this approach to educational change? The Nuffield Group worked closely together for some time and early meetings were directed towards establishing a position and working out a strategy. The position which emerged was clearly not functionalist in orientation, rather it leaned towards the values of the interpretive paradigm. The group were concerned to understand undergraduate teaching from the point of view of those most involved — lecturers and students. But they were also concerned that the knowledge gained should not remain at the level of research. The intention was that it should be shared with those who would benefit from an increased understanding of their own situation. Herein lay the major problem — how best to diffuse the knowledge. The group

attempted to create a network.

> 'Our purpose, however, goes beyond the collection of interesting ideas in undergraduate teaching. We are also anxious to encourage and facilitate closer co-operation between like-minded individuals and groups of teachers throughout the university system.' (GRIHE 1973 p.2)

In their attempt they had some success: communication and co-operation did occur, mainly across institutions and departments, and involved those with an interest in a particular problem or innovation. Further, many of those whom the group identified as innovators, whose work they wrote about and who joined in the workshops and other activities, received encouragement for their efforts and occasionally an increased status and recognition amongst their colleagues. Some were stimulated to further efforts and were taken more seriously when they talked about teaching and learning in their own institution.

But did the knowledge which the group acquired and shared with a relatively small number of academics spread further, into the system as a whole? On this there are less grounds for optimism. The establishment of a network of interested academics formed the basis of the diffusion strategy. The assumption was that information and ideas about developments in teaching and learning would reach other insiders through members of the network, either in conversation or via the Nuffield publications which it was hoped they would introduce. But, as the group themselves established during the course of their visits, the subject of teaching and learning, unlike research, is not a topic which is regularly or easily broached by academics amongst themselves. For some lecturers the interview with a member of the Nuffield team was almost the only time they had discussed in any depth their teaching, its problems and their ideas for overcoming them. Whereas the channels of communication for research are well established and well used the same is not true for curriculum matters. This stems not so much from an absence of writing, or journals in which to publish, as from a traditional reticence on the part of lecturers to discuss their teaching with colleagues. A strategy, therefore, based upon an expectation of easy communication, can be frustrated by the norms of a host culture which do not encourage and support the exchange of information on such matters. There is no evidence that the Nuffield Group overcame this particular problem and reached those who might have benefited most from the information collected.

## A RE-EDUCATIVE STRATEGY

Although this example is concerned with the problems of bringing about change in secondary schools, the issues which it raises are highly relevant to all sectors of education.

The Schools Council/Nuffield Humanities project was launched in 1967 with the aim of helping students in 5th and 6th forms in secondary schools to develop an understanding of social situations and the controversial value issues raised by them. The position adopted by the team was one closely

aligned to the action frame of reference described in Chapter 5 (p.45). In educational terms this suggests that students should have freedom to develop their own ideas within a stable but flexible framework of constraints and directions. The position was summarized by a member of the team, Ruddock (1976), as follows:

> '. . . It [the project] is concerned with a learning relationship between teacher and student which is marked by respect for the students' independence of thinking. The project is best described as a programme of controversial issues, with experimental strategies for handling the controversial issues in ways which will help students to consider a range of viewpoints and to think things out without being influenced by people, such as the teacher, because they are in a position of authority. . . .
>
> 'Work in the classroom also shows that teachers who attempt an instructional role on a range of controversial issues frequently give misinformation to students. The Project therefore casts the teacher in a different role — as chairman of a discussion group. . . .' (p.164)

This approach, representing a carefully thought out value position, was brought to the secondary sector of education — a sector generally not attuned to such values. The cultural conditions in most schools are dominated by several factors. There is an emphasis on instruction as distinct from 'free thinking'. Relationships between teacher and taught are conditioned by authority — the teacher authorizing and directing the pupils and able to use sanctions if directions are not complied with. Disciplines are separated from each other and taught individually as subjects in their own right — different teachers, rooms and timetable slots all tend to pronounce the distinctiveness of each subject.

The project team were not unaware of the difference between their approach and the conditions prevailing in the schools. There was sufficient expertise and experience amongst the group to provide a great deal of knowledge about the general cultural conditions in most secondary schools. According to Rudduck (op. cit. 1976) a paper was distributed, to heads of schools interested in the project, which included something akin to a consumer warning on a cigarette packet. It read:

> 'There may be schools which would be ill advised, either because of the traditional ethos of the institution or because of its particular stage of development to become involved in the kind of experiment which the Project offers. All schools should be aware of its implications for change: more immediately in the role of the teacher and his relationship with pupils; ultimately, in the definition of authority and in the way it relates to individual responsibility, both within and outside the school. . . . The paper assumes that an interested head has already considered the general appropriateness of the Project for his school in terms of:
> 1. the authoritarianism of the system within the school and whether

the ethos and attitudes are open or conducive to change, or resistant to it;

2. any reorganisational upheavals and whether uncertainty is such that research and innovation would be too precariously based;
3. his commitment to the general aims of the Project and his concern for the group of pupils for whom the Project is intended so that teachers would be working against a background of understanding and support.' (p.19)

Having established a position which ran counter to the prevailing conditions in most schools the team had created for themselves a considerable task — it involved no less than bringing one set of values into host cultures which adhered to another set. The team eventually agreed that the best (perhaps the only) way of achieving this was through training and this became their main strategy. Teachers had somehow to be helped to see and perform their role differently: to change from one value position to another. They would have to learn to facilitate a very individualized form of learning rather than administer formal instruction, and they would have to deal with broad issues, which crossed subject boundaries, instead of being content to teach a single subject.

Was this the right strategy and how well did it succeed? Rudduck makes no attempt to disguise the problems, disappointments and setbacks. The task, she says, was underestimated. Wide dissemination was sought and considerable reliance was placed upon the help of local education authorities. Their support was crucial in giving encouragement to schools and teachers to take part, in supplying information about likely pilot schools to the team, and in providing additional resources. Although the team did work within some schools the dissemination strategy largely depended upon courses held outside and involving teachers nominated by the LEAs. Through these courses it was hoped to influence either teams from specific schools or individuals who might act as innovators and possibly trainers in their own schools or localities.

The desire to work with a team from the same school was an important part of the strategy. The assumption was that a group with a similar understanding of, and commitment to, the ideas of the project would make more impact upon an institution and be more able to maintain the innovation once begun. As against this, individuals returning to their own institutions convinced of the need for the new approach would probably have to face colleagues who were at best tolerant and at worst sceptical of the new ideas. Furthermore the support of the head was seen as crucial. Rudduck makes the following point:

> 'If the experiment is to be profitable the head must regard himself as having an investment in it. Ideally a project should be introduced as part of the schools policy for change or for sustaining change, and the organisational decisions should be made with the kind of care and understanding that policy effectively commands.' (p.79)

This shows a clear recognition of the need to influence key aspects of the host culture rather than a few of its members. But it proved difficult to recruit teams to the workshops, and, as predicted, individuals who benefited from the courses found it difficult to sustain their enthusiasm faced with opposition from colleagues and often from the students themselves. The experiment seldom became an integral part of a school's policy for change.

A great deal of responsibility for supporting the project in schools was given to LEA officials but few, it seemed, had the commitment to the project or the power to influence schools in the manner desired by the project team.

It seems that the incompatibility between the values implicit in the project and the kind of value system prevailing in most of the schools proved to be an important stumbling block. Perhaps each school should have been treated individually and intensive negotiations entered into in order to bring about the prior changes necessary in their commitment to the project. But if this had been done the extent of dissemination would have had to be drastically reduced as the resources available were applied to fewer schools. This might have been a strategy which would have achieved change of a more intensive and lasting kind in a few institutions but this was not the project's policy. Like most centrally sponsored projects wide dissemination was an implicit goal.

A research project, which studied the impact and take-up of Schools Council projects (Steadman et al. 1980) made the following significant comment about the humanities project:

> 'This project is an example of one which, at one time, generated a great deal of press coverage, and is undoubtedly wid ly known of within higher education departments and schools of education, colleges and other establishments. But it appears that those aspects of the project's approach which generated such interest — the discussion and enquiry based approach which cross traditional subject boundaries; the willingness to introduce discussion of issues which would be expected to divide pupils, parents and teachers because of essential value judgements; and the 'neutral chairman' role expected of teachers — have resulted in a project which teachers have found hard to assimilate, and schools found difficult to accommodate. The result has been considerable adaptation of the project's ideas and material.' (p.A44)

PLANNED LINKAGE

Planned linkage according to Havelock and Huberman (1977) requires careful planning, involving detailed problem analysis, specification of goals and systematic search for solutions, carried out by the consultants in conjunction with clients. This is followed by implementation of plans through co-ordination of effort between the two groups. This was a strategy adopted by a centrally funded project sponsored by the, then National, Council for Educational Technology.

The Colleges of Education Learning Programmes Project (CELPP) was

established in 1972 to support the application of the principles and practices of educational technology to the education and training of teachers. By convincing teachers of the value of educational technology during their training period it was hoped to spread acceptance of the ideas and techniques implicit in this approach to teaching and learning into schools. Those responsible were well aware of the care which would be necessary in presenting radical ideas to cultures which for decades had operated on the basis of quite different values to those associated with educational technology. The outsiders took a number of steps to try to bridge this gap and to operate in accordance with the planned linkage approach. That they were not as successful as they might have wished was probably due to the fact that they did not penetrate deeply enough into the host cultures in ascertaining needs and securing co-operation.

The outsiders' position, as the council's name implies, is based upon an educational technology approach and this in turn is supported by functionalist values. The council interprets educational technology as:

> '. . . being concerned in the broadest sense with the design of learning systems, drawing upon all the available methods resources and communications media, and integrating them with established teaching techniques in the most effective manner to achieve stated ends.' (CET 1977 p.6)

This interpretation forms the basis for all policy decisions, and influences the work of all projects which the council initiates or supports. In 1970 a feasibility study commissioned by the council had as its main terms of reference:

> 'to investigate the actual and potential needs of the colleges of education in the United Kingdom for learning systems that can be applied to improve the personal education and professional preparation of their students; it is envisaged that such learning systems should include material, study guides and programmes for individual, small group and class use.'

and:

> 'on the basis of this study to produce a costed plan for a project to be set up by NCET in collaboration with the colleges to help to meet these needs in such a way that the activity will be sustained by the college system itself on the termination of the project.' (Collier et al. 1971 p.13)

A team of four, all members of colleges of education, visited over sixty colleges in the United Kingdom. It was led by a college principal well known for his commitment to and involvement in the application of educational technology to the training of teachers. Other members of the team were also involved in the use of educational technology in one form or another. These first 'ambassadors' for the project all had connections with host institutions and at the same time were committed to the aims of the project. In some ways, therefore, they seemed ideal envoys — able to maintain a foothold in both camps and bring about the appropriate level of collaboration. But their

commitment to the values of the outsiders — values which were not necessarily shared by the majority of insiders — may have made their job more difficult. Their visits to the colleges were an important first step but it seems that the majority of interviews were conducted with staff, who were 'active and interested in the field'. Neville (1976), a co-ordinator of the project, referred to those early visits in these terms:

> 'When the feasibility study team had talked initially to practising educational technologists, to the converted as it were, the educational technologists had supported the idea of strong centralised direction to give impetus to their efforts.' (p.8)

The CELP feasibility team, as a result of their inquiries, produced a carefully documented and costed, far-reaching proposal for the setting up of a major project. It centred upon the production and use of learning materials, packages and programmes for students. There was to be a network of production units based in the colleges and co-ordinated by a central planning and liaison unit which would have a number of functions: collection and dissemination of information, consultancy, and the power and resources to commission the production of materials which were beyond the capacity of the network.

The report (Collier et al. 1971) was clearly sensitive to the factors involved in influencing a host culture:

> 'In considering the process by which an innovation is developed and becomes rooted in an institution, several aspects need to be considered. In the first place, one needs to take into account the nature of the innovation itself, the reasons that led to its introduction, its likely consequences, and the underlying values and assumptions that it implies. A second factor to be considered is the context in which such planned changes take place, the kind of institution, the climate of opinion among staff, and the pressures and constraints that operate both within and outside the institution. Thirdly, consideration must be given to the methods by which the innovation is introduced, the sources of the decisions that lead to its adoption, and such things as the financial and other implications of implementing the changes that have been planned.' (p.45)

This is a clear statement of some of the main issues to which outsiders must address themselves, but what is missing in the actual proposal is a clear analysis of the kinds of institution likely to be involved, the climate of opinion among staff in them and the pressures and constraints upon them. The council, however, did not ignore reference to the sources of decisions and the financial implications connected with the innovation, and they identified the principals of the colleges as having a key role to play in the implementation of the propsal. A series of workshops was arranged for them in which the aim was to demonstrate the potential of learning packages. Neville (op. cit. 1976) describes their purpose as:

'to given them an opportunity to experience learning from a package

> (that) would both convince them of its effectiveness and at the same time enable them quickly to see the implications of adopting such a method extensively in initial teacher training.' (p.6)

The early workshops were not highly successful: the main reason being that there were no really suitable learning packages with which to demonstrate. But in some ways this was less important than the fact that principals were able to talk together, and to the council representatives, about the proposed project and relate it to the needs, as they saw them, of their own colleges. Neville explains this development as follows:

> 'What the principals in their wisdom told the team was that if the changes were to be effective with other tutors, what was needed, apart from patience, was not a prescriptive but a diagnostic approach to tutors' perceived problems; information on solutions for those who had diagnosed their own problems, with a consultancy service to help others define clearly what their problems really were.' (p.8)

This advice was heeded and the project, when it was set up in 1972, was a much more modest affair than originally envisaged and was to become 'a supportive, largely decentralised service responding to expressed needs and with little power to initiate'. The main elements were an information service, a catalogue of materials, a copying and duplicating service, a consultancy service, and a series of workshop conferences.

Thus, as a result of consultation with senior members of the institutions concerned, the detailed approach was changed radically and the aims of the project were brought more in line with the needs of the colleges — at least as perceived by the principals. There were now to be facilities to respond to requests for information and advice concerning the use not only of educational technology but more specifically of learning packages. Three working parties were set up: one was to advise on the information service; another was to help make arrangements for the consultancy and workshop service; and the third was to report on the problem of materials production. The membership of these groups was largely drawn from 'practitioners of educational technology in the colleges'. Also each college was asked to appoint a liason officer through whom the project team could communicate with tutors. In most cases these people were either those who had responsibility for courses and/or services in educational technology or audio-visual aids or they were librarians.

The project, therefore, relied upon links forged with senior management educational technologists and support services within the colleges. Even at this late stage it seems collaboration had not involved the real clients — those lecturers who would actually use the project's services.

It is hard to judge what progress was or could have been made towards achieving the project's aims for it had not been in existence for long when the wholesale closure of the colleges by the government began. The co-ordinator, however, refers to an important lesson which was learned as the project proceeded:

> 'It has been the consistent experience of this project that despite considerable efforts at 'advertising' the projects services in the colleges, they are seldom called for until someone associated with the project makes themselves known personally to individuals at the college and expresses an interest in that college or that individual's problems.' (p.8)

The need to focus upon the interests of particular individuals, groups and colleges is mentioned by the co-ordinator several times and he concludes with a comment of some significance:

> 'It may be this element of personal relationship to the implementer of innovation and his individual context which is the key to successful long term innovation by central bodies.' (p.11)

Teaching styles within colleges have always relied upon direct contact between staff and students and through this the development has been sought of personal skills as well as academic ability in students. Educational technology in whatever form it is proposed might have a place within such a context, but for tutors used to a culture and values largely opposed to or, at least, ignorant of this approach, the introduction of new ideas, at the behest of outsiders (even those from within their own college), would tend to be viewed with some suspicion. The values of the host culture may not be rigidly against innovations which purport to be more efficient or effective but those who hold these values will expect first, direct contact with the outsiders and then, explanations which clearly indicate how the proposed change will affect them personally.

As with the humanities project the team faced a dilemma. The 'broad sweep' innovation strategy was clearly not going to work. The only alternative seemed to be to concentrate upon specific institutions, subject groups or individuals. Only in this way could the team hope to make some impact on values which were not in alignment with those which provided the basis for their policy. But would such a strategy be acceptable to a council seeking broad national change? There were signs in the history of this project that both strategy and policy were beginning to change to meet the circumstances which they faced.

## PARTICIPATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

The participative problem solving approach according to Havelock and Huberman (op. cit. 1977) involves innovation which is 'controlled by local people, is responsive to their needs and emphasises local resources and self-help (p.246).' This was the strategy adopted by the Higher Education Learning Project (Physics) funded by the Nuffield Foundation for the period 1972-76. The activities involved a 'voluntary association' of lecturers from physics departments in a number of universities and polytechnics. Central co-ordination was exercised through a half-time co-ordinator and eventually a co-ordinating committee. The general aim was to improve the quality of physics teaching in higher education but the proposal and application for funding did not say how this would be achieved. As Black and Ogborn

(1977), both long serving members of the project, put it, the proposal was:

> '. . . a request by a group of people for funds to do whatever they turned out to do, though of course it defined the problems as being ones of concern to university teachers and which could be attacked through mutual help.' (p.155)

They describe this approach as being based upon the 'uncertainty principle'. There was initially no policy and no clear strategy. The only primary objective was to bring interested lecturers together to talk and this was the main activity for the first year.

> 'Meetings and discussions played an essential role in the life of the project, in several different ways. We soon found that project members regarded these not as necessary chores, but as, in some respects, the most important and valuable activity of all. Many regarded the chance to talk about teaching ideas, and to share experiences with others, as crucial in maintaining their interest, in enlarging their perceptions, in helping them to think their own ideas through and — perhaps most important of all, in building up their confidence in an area where many felt tentative and exposed. . . . These meetings did not attempt to make piecemeal decisions to go ahead or not in the areas discussed, but instead moved slowly to the relative values of different possibilities. . . . In this way, by the end of the first year several teachers were planning individual study courses or working on ideas for tutorial teaching and laboratories, without the project having decided where to place its resources in support.' (p.151)

Out of the first year's discussions there emerged four main areas of work to which various members of the group committed themselves — practical work, tutorial teaching, individual study courses, and students' reactions to learning in general. Sub-groups were built around these themes but the principles of voluntary association and of action only after lengthy discussion were maintained in each. The value position adopted by the group as a whole was largely interpretive. The most fundamental concerns as described by the co-ordinators included the following:

> '. . . to look for ways of improving the quality of relationships between teachers and taught and to do so in ways which might emphasise and strengthen the individual responsibility of the student for his own work.
>
> '. . . (it was taken as) axiomatic that university teachers were accountable for their own teaching: that nobody could or should make decisions for them or supply them with ready made courses of action.' (p.153)

Both the structure of the project and its policy evolved over time. 'Policy was not simply decided and then implemented. Much of it evolved slowly through trial and error.' Although there were several regular and continuing members of the group there was also a constant change in membership as individuals attached themselves for a time to an activity which interested

them and then withdrew. Overall, the level of commitment was high. Groups of teachers travelled to over twenty meetings a year and written contributions for these meetings and for later publication came from lecturers in over twenty departments compared with the six that were involved at the start. Eventually several books were published detailing the project's activities and setting out ideas and experiments which had been discussed and tried. The project generated a good deal of interest during its lifetime and the books have ensured that its activities will become known to a wider audience. Because of the adoption of the unusual 'uncertainty principle' and the strenuous, time-consuming efforts to involve insiders in the identification of their own problems and the search for their own solutions, the gap between insiders and outsiders was considerably reduced. Throughout the development of the project the values of the host culture influenced and helped to form the outsiders' policy and strategy.

The extent of the changes brought about by the project are difficult to judge. Several ideas about physics teaching were developed and have since become accepted as fairly common practice. But probably more important is the experience gained by those involved as a result of working out their own ideas in company with others facing similar problems.

In retrospect the co-ordinators suggest that the overall 'participative' approach was the correct one.

> 'We would like to think that we have produced an example of a form of useful activity which stays close to the real and valuable perceptions of the practitioner while trying to create the conditions for thoughtful and sustained work to be built on this experience; and which deserves the name of research while not acting out a phantasy of 'doing educational research', without regard for its value or meanings for those it concerns most.' (p.159)

## SUMMARY

The five examples described above indicate the range of possible approaches which outsiders might adopt in connection with educational innovation. Each example illustrates the problems which face outsiders in their attempts to influence insiders and each points to the crucial factor of the match or mismatch between the values which underpin the outsiders' position and those which provide the dominant base for the host culture. Most of the examples, with the exception of the first (Swedish television), suggest that the outsiders were aware of the importance of this factor and that each group attempted successfully, or unsuccessfully, to devise its own way of bridging the gap.

Various strategies were illustrated, including use of power, the creation of a network and diffusion of information, the re-training of teachers, a survey followed by the collaborative planning (with selected representatives of host institutions) of a broad innovation strategy, and finally the involvement on a voluntary basis of lecturers from several host institutions in

the task of identifying their own problems and seeking their own solutions.

These five approaches can be likened to those found in the literature on educational change and referred to in Chapter 3: 'power', 'diffusion', 'normative/re-educative', 'planned linkage', and 'participative problem solving'. It is clear from all of these examples that the seemingly logical approach, involving the formulation of policy followed by a search for an optimum strategy, is not one ideally suited to most situations in which outsiders seek to influence insiders in the process of educational change. Rather, policy and strategy will tend to emerge if they are allowed to and will align themselves more with the situation which faces the outsiders if they are constantly set against the outsider's value position and the insider's culture. It is the interplay between all these factors which lies at the heart of the change process.

7

# A CASE FOR DIPLOMACY

An adviser working within an institution has a number of potential advantages over his counterparts who are attached to centrally funded projects and operating, literally, from the outside. He should, for instance, possess much greater knowledge of the structure and workings of his own institution, its politics, centres of support and resistance, informal networks and dominant personalities. He should also have personal contacts and, in the normal course of events, have created relationships from which he might expect support and co-operation. But these advantages cannot be assumed: the home-based adviser may also suffer the fate of the 'prophet in his own land'. Relationships may over time turn sour and at worst produce a persona non grata situation of the kind depicted in Chapter 1.

A satisfactory outsider-insider working relationship within an institution depends upon many factors: some connected with the structure of the organization, available resources, past policies and decisions; others the result of interaction between key personalities; and some the result of a certain amount of good fortune, such as being in the right place, with the right suggestion, at the right time. A strategy clearly cannot cater for all of these factors: it cannot account for luck, nor for people liking or not liking each other, but it can offer a broad operating framework for the outsider, within which the chances of establishing sound working relationships with insiders are increased and the risk lessened of 'diplomatic blunders' bringing about a total rejection of their efforts. This framework can be established by following the principles discussed in earlier chapters: clarification of the outsiders' value position; increased knowledge of the host culture and the values and assumptions held by its members; and the formulation of a policy and strategy which facilitates compatibility between the two.

The case study which follows relates to an experiment in educational change at the University of Sussex. It is an experiment which has had its share of frustrations and failures but it has also indicated that progress can be made if principles of diplomacy are applied to each situation.

## THE OUTSIDERS' POSITION

The outsider group adopted various titles during the course of its life. It began in 1966 as the Centre for Academic Services, changed its name to the Centre for Educational Technology in 1968, was called the Higher Educational Development Project for a brief period, and then became the Teaching and Learning Support Programme in 1975. These titles all reflect

attempts to create the right image within the university but they also indicate the changing value position of the group of faculty most involved: certainly the change from Centre for Educational Technology to Teaching and Learning Support Programme marked a considerable shift in orientation.

The university was one of nine which in 1967 the University Grants Committee designated as 'high-activity' centres in educational technology. These centres were given special grants for staff and equipment and were expected to provide information, expertise, training, research and learning materials. A report on the activities of the centre (CET — Sussex 1970) gives some indication of the overall approach adopted at that time.

> 'One of the principal problems for Sussex, as for other high-activity centres, has been the need for a definition of educational technology which can clarify its role for higher education. The definition adopted by the Centre for Educational Technology at Sussex is, the systematic study of the means whereby educational ends are achieved.' (p.3)

Initially most attention was paid to the provision of television facilities, information and a consultancy service. With regard to consultancy the report continues:

> 'Such a service, which seems the best way of using the skills of educational technologists, is something more than a passive provision of information and suggestions. It is a means of promoting systematic procedures in the conception, design and presentation of courses, and of helping to train academic faculty in these procedures.' (p.82)

The criteria for evaluating developments were also discussed and the following indicators were suggested:

> ' (a) Improved student performance on existing courses.
> (b) Upgraded and updated courses with 'improved' objectives and at least equal standards of performance.
> (c) Decrease in teaching costs without any lowering of student performance.' (p.4)

All of these statements suggest underlying values associated with the functionalist paradigm. The notion of educational technology grew from the application of these values to teaching and learning and it would, therefore, be unusual to find a centre for educational technology which failed to subscribe to them. But the report also acknowledges other values and suggests two further indicators of improvements in teaching and learning:

> ' (d) Increased concern by faculty members for their teaching roles.
> (e) Improved student attitudes towards learning.'

The notions of 'concern for teaching' and 'improved attitudes' suggest interpretive values, and as the centre became established there was a gradual shift in emphasis in this direction which continued as members of the group gained experience working on projects with groups of faculty. The shift continued when three new members of faculty became involved in the centre's activities and brought with them experience and values linked to the interpretive paradigm. The change was further stimulated by the fact that

the Education Area[1] had just mounted a Masters degree in curriculum development in higher education and all of the core members of the centre were involved. The planning of the course involved lengthy discussions on philosophical issues concerned with curriculum development and subsequently, as the course became operational, similar issues were explored in detail with participants from many different academic backgrounds. The two activities — attempting to bring about educational change within the university and teaching a Masters course in curriculum development — created an awareness amongst members of the group of their own and their colleagues' value positions. This did not prevent disagreement over some issues but in general it resulted in a more informed discussion and easier working relationships. The group's overall position might best be described as falling within the action frame of reference — a position which accepts that subjective interpretation and action by individuals takes place within a framework created by organizational norms and structures (Ch. 5, pp.45-64).

The Teaching and Learning Support Programme, created in 1975, continues most of the functions of the Centre for Educational Technology but is organized somewhat differently. Being a programme rather than a centre it is operated by members of faculty attached to subject departments, who teach for the greater part of their time. Each contributor to the programme devotes a proportion of his or her time which can vary from year to year according to other commitments. A group of four or five from the Education Department usually form the core group but occasionally faculty from other departments also join the programme. Reductions in teaching loads are allowed to those who formally devote part of their time to the programme. In the past the university has allocated the equivalent of two to three posts each year to this activity.

Members of the programme group have become involved in many, by now familiar activities. They provide the introductory programme for new faculty; they organize seminars or workshops on specific topics to do with teaching, learning and curriculum development; they help to monitor or evaluate courses; they assist in course development or the production of teaching and learning materials; and they act as consultants to individual members of faculty who are concerned with particular problems. In the course of these activities they call upon services provided elsewhere in the university — media services, library, counselling, etc. Over the course of several years these activities add up to a reasonable catalogue of events but even so the university could hardly be said to be fully committed to centrally organized curriculum or staff development work. Indeed the majority of the 400 or so academics would be ignorant of the current and past activities of the programme and those who did recall anything would mainly associate it

[1] Education Area is Sussex terminology. It is, more or less, equivalent to an education department in other universities.

with the 'training' of new faculty. But there is a minority, hopefully comprising a growing number of people, who have some reason to recall the activities of programme members in another connection: that is, the work directed towards specific, departmental, curriculum related problems. This activity utilizes established organizational structures and procedure and adopts the diplomatic ideas discussed earlier.

## THE HOST CULTURE

Sussex, like any other university, has certain special features related to academic structure, aims and philosophy: but it shares characteristics common to the university sector at large. It is these which provide the constraints within which a centralized programme has to function.

Universities share a particular approach to decision making which depends upon the idea of autonomy. It is an accepted principle of academic government that individuals or subject groupings have the right to decide for themselves, provided they adhere to certain agreed rules and values. This creates what Handy (1977) calls the 'organization of consent'. In such an organization there are '. . . deep beliefs about the way people should relate to each other. Hierarchy is bad. Argument is good. All men and women are essentially equal.'

The mode of exercising authority and influence in such an organization is complex. Cohen and March (1974) refer to the situation as 'organized anarchy', a view shared and expanded by Baldridge et al. (1978). The belief that all men and women are essentially equal is seemingly contradicted by a structure containing two overlapping hierarchies — one academic and one executive. But academic hierarchy does not necessarily imply authority and control in the usual bureaucratic sense and the power of office can only be effectively exercised in limited circumstances and in limited ways. Furthermore the academic and executive systems complement each other only with a considerable degree of uncertainty and ambiguity.

But despite the uncertainty created by this seemingly 'anarchic' system, decisions still have to be taken and implemented. Meetings, of which there are many, have a special function in this respect. They result in a form of consultative management. They are seldom decision-making bodies; instead they take on the role of testing grounds for decisions, forums for debate and platforms for dissenters.

Noble and Pym (1970), in their case study of a university, describe the decision-making process as a 'receding locus of power' — the real decisions always seem to be taken somewhere else. They conclude that for the system to survive, for it to make rapid decisions, and for it to deploy resources effectively, power has to be concentrated in the hands of a small group. This, however, threatens the maintenance of individual and collective autonomy, and a compromise solution, which they call an 'involuted committee structure', tends to emerge. The committees which form this structure provide the stage for discussion, for the consideration of alternatives, for

making, accepting or rejecting proposals, and for reaching compromise solutions. Operating within this structure there is an informal network of experienced senior members, normally department heads, who are able to influence decisions at key points. Although their influence is tacitly recognized it remains discreet enough not to conflict with the prevailing values of the system; hence the deliberate opacity of the structure.

Bailey (1977) suggests three arenas for academic discourse — front stage, back stage and under stage. He follows Noble and Pym by pointing out that most of the so-called representational committees exist in effect to sanction decisions already taken somewhere else. The detailed negotiations designed to reach working compromises between opposing groups take place in smaller, often ad hoc or temporary settings where membership is gained by appointment or co-option. But underlying and permeating both arenas is the constant interactive process involving members in informal testing of opinions, building alliances, personal bargaining, and attempts to influence each other through the exchange of information and favours.

The outsider thus has to operate within an organization which has a commitment to individual and collective autonomy, a discreet and unspecified power network, and a highly complex committee structure in which the actual decision-making process is obscured. This means that each activity has to be separately and carefully negotiated, paying due regard to the views of all individuals or groups who may wish to dissent. This can result in protracted meetings and debate, which may eventually, through failure to agree, result in the abandonment of proposed or even ongoing projects. Those involved in the informal power network are useful and often essential allies in this work: but such is the general standing of outsiders' activities that such allies are unlikely to intervene in what they may see as a fairly peripheral matter.

There is an important consequence of autonomy which has led, directly or indirectly, to certain privileges for lecturers which are not accorded to members of many other occupations. These include tenure, academic freedom, flexibility to organize their own time (and to a large extent to pursue their own academic interests), and freedom to participate in decision making but at the same time to choose to remain relatively unfettered. Not all academics would perceive themselves as having this degree of autonomy: but those who do would seldom be in much doubt as to the main grounds for it — namely, specialized knowledge.

It is this that accords academics respect as professionals, grants them status among their peers and provides them with an acknowledged claim to resources. Each department and each individual within it will in most circumstances seek to establish and maintain autonomy by extending and deepening a particular area of knowledge. Research is the means whereby progress and security is maintained; it is research in all its forms which provides the essential motivating force for individuals and their disciplinary units. Rice (1970) sums up the extreme position:

> 'Creative individuals have been appointed: they have worked on their own or they have built groups round themselves, established laboratories, retreats or other forms of protection from interference, and worked therein. Their outputs have attracted resources to maintain and expand the institutions they have built. Autonomy is taken for granted: control of and commitment to the task are intrinsic.'

But most members of faculty must also teach, and this may create a sense of ambivalence. Halsey and Trow (1971) see this as important:

> 'The tension between teaching and research is a major cleavage in university life. But because universities (unlike research institutions and American liberal arts colleges) exist to serve both functions, the conflicts must be contained and compromise must be reached.'

The compromise becomes a decision for individuals and for the departmental group within which they operate. Halsey and Trow suggest from their survey that although most academics are involved in both activities, the majority have a greater interest in research than teaching. This duality presents a problem for outsiders concerned with promoting educational change. If members of faculty are to be persuaded to devote more time to this activity, from where will they take it? They are likely to resist any intrusion on the time they expect to devote to research. One of the important decisions for academics is concerned with ordering priorities and allocating time to different tasks. This is not an easy thing to do: autonomy creates uncertainty. Decisions about what to do and when to do it, which in most other jobs are made by management, in universities rest with individual members of faculty. There are limits imposed by teaching and committee timetables or the availability of laboratory space and equipment, but there is still considerable discretion for most lecturers to choose how they will use a large proportion of their time. In most university departments there is open competition for this time and there are various, and sometimes conflicting cues given as to how it should be spent. It is difficult to achieve a reasonable balance between the competing demands of research, teaching and administration, and at the same time to maintain a satisfactory balance between work and leisure. Once an acceptable compromise is reached it becomes a stabilizing factor and provides an important sense of control over an uncertain work situation.

It is a reluctance to disturb this balance, rather than lack of time per se, which discourages many academics from engaging in innovation. For those who do become involved, it is likely that the time will be found from that area of work which is least fully extended. A fall in student numbers, for instance, may release teaching time: or a temporary lull in personal research may release time from that source. For those who wish to be involved but are committed fully in other respects, the only alternative may be to extend their total working time — and this may impose considerable strain. Any of these sources could provide extra opportunities for involvement in educational change: but the important point is that for various reasons, not least a

commitment to research and the maintenance of the delicate equilibrium between it and other work, they may not be readily resorted to. The points raised so far suggest a homogeneity of perspectives, values and procedures amongst academics. But as suggested in Chapter 4 cultural differences generally exist between different departments and subject disciplines. Sussex is no exception in this respect and here the situation is complicated by the fact that members of traditional subject groupings (such as history, sociology, English, chemistry, physics, etc.) are physically separated, and individuals who would, in other universities, be in the same department are in Sussex in different schools of study (such as English and American studies, African and Asian studies, molecular sciences, or maths and physical sciences). For the individual this can result in an allegiance to two cultures — a subject group and a school.

Outsiders (members of the Teaching and Learning Support Programme), called upon to work with a particular subject group, are helped by knowing something of the history and composition of that group, its members' research interests and teaching commitments and the general paradigms of enquiry which underpin their work. But they may also be called upon to work with a school of study which incorporates several subject groups. In engineering, for instance, there are electrical, mechanical, and structural engineers, all adhering to certain broad values regarding scientific inquiry but also differing on specific theoretical and methodological ideas. In social sciences the mix would include a wide range of subjects including, for instance, sociology, law, economics, linguistics, social anthropology and politics. The intermingling of these disciplines produces a cosmopolitan culture. Outsiders will be helped in their task if they are aware of the value positions and customs of each subject group and their likely reactions to ideas and suggestions based upon values with which they are unfamiliar.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The approach which is now described depends for its success on forming a joint working relationship between outsiders and insiders — that is between the 'adviser' and his group (The Teaching and Learning Support Programme — TLSP) and representatives of a particular department. (To avoid complex terminology the term department will now be used in place of school, subject group, area or unit.) The relationship is usually centred upon a 'joint working party' which may be differently organized from department to department but to which certain general rules or guidelines apply (discussed in detail later).

Over a five-year period eight such projects have been initiated. This may seem relatively few but the work is time-consuming and intensive; the studies are generally concerned with particularly complex problems; and during the research phase many academics, students and administrators may be involved.

To illustrate the approach, four examples of projects undertaken in the

past few years will be described.

The first was concerned with the problem of an apparently unsatisfactory tutorial system in an engineering department. There seemed to be too many tutorials, causing overload for faculty and students; tutors complained that students came ill-prepared; students protested that the tutorials were rushed, often turned into mini-lectures, covered only set problems and left no time for matters of wider interest. Student representatives, through a joint staff/student committee, brought the matter to the departmental meeting at which the working group was set up. It met over a period of two terms and its report caused considerable debate inside and outside the official committees. Some, but not all, of its recommendations were accepted. The number of tutorials was reduced; some longer tutorials were introduced alongside combined tutorials designed to provide links between different subjects; steps were taken through a monitoring scheme to provide closer integration between subject and personal tutoring schemes; and a new course development committee was established.

Another working party in a science department concerned itself with the operation of the department's degree assessment scheme. This scheme has, since some major changes were introduced several years ago, given considerable weight to course work assessment, which now counts 60 per cent towards the degree, as against 'finals', which make up the remaining 40 per cent. Some faculty had expressed concern over standards and also complained about the increased complexity and workload associated with the scheme. The working part met over a period of a year and submitted a report containing a great deal of statistical evidence concerning assessment results over the previous four years; correlations between course work and exam results; and an analysis of the views expressed by staff and students for and against existing practice. A number of alternatives was presented to the department, together with some specific recommendations. After discussion at a regular departmental meeting it was agreed to implement certain changes immediately: there was to be considerably increased information available to students and staff about assessment procedures, and more opportunities for students to obtain detailed feedback on their results. Some more far-reaching proposals were passed on to specific course groups for detailed consideration.

A third, and more recent project appears to have been initiated because of the pressures generated by the current wave of cuts and economies. One department (not the only one, it should be added) found itself dealing with more students with fewer faculty and a lower budget. This caused some members of the group to question the way in which courses were planned and offered, teaching organized, and resources allocated. A meeting of the whole department elected two of its members to work with two members of the Teaching and Learning Support Programme in order to study the situation. All members of the department and about one-third of the students were interviewed initially. The interviews with faculty ranged over broad issues

such as the nature of the subject and its philosophies and methodologies, as well as the more detailed aspects of the ways of arranging their teaching and organizing their time. Students talked about their attitudes toward the courses and the teaching methods employed as well as their own learning styles and problems.

The four working party members decided that in order to report back to the full departmental group brief notes should be produced setting out first, the main issues raised in the interviews and secondly, the teaching methods employed by the different members of faculty and the time which they devoted to each method. The notes were to be used as background material for a series of discussions at lunchtimes and in the evening involving both staff and students.

The study revealed that most of the lecturers adopted a well established pattern of teaching based upon small groups of five students followed up by tutorials with individuals. Although a traditional Sussex pattern this is an 'expensive' way of teaching and the time actually put into teaching by lecturers far exceeded the time allowed by the university (a time allowance which had recently been reduced). The working party was asked to prepare a set of 'costed', teaching method alternatives and, upon receiving and discussing these, some members immediately began planning their next term's teaching on different lines. Whether students will benefit or otherwise from this change it is difficult to say at this stage but from the interviews there appeared to be no widespread opposition to working, sometimes, in larger groups, provided the individual tutorial system was maintained. The outsiders will, in due course, probably be involved in a follow-up study, to monitor the effects of changes which have been implemented.

The fourth example concerns a major study carried out by ten members of one department (including student representatives) and five members of the Teaching and Learning Support Programme. The focus of the study was the nature, function and effectiveness of preliminary courses (prelims) which all students take when entering the department. In various written statements about prelims it was clear that the ten or so options open to students were intended to ease them into their studies by providing: a general introduction to the social sciences; a chance to change their minds about their main study programme; and an opportunity to acquire the kind of study skills (particularly writing essays) generally thought necessary successfully to complete a university course. The department was uneasy on two counts: the first was that many prelims appeared to be becoming (too) closely associated with the major subjects which students would be studying later; the second was that some faculty felt that essay standards were falling and that perhaps prelims were not concentrating enough on necessary writing skills.

Information was collected by the working party in various ways. The outsiders interviewed all departmental members of the group in order to establish the kind of views which individuals held about prelims. The

information was immediately fed back to the working party and discussed at length. Then a sample of second-year tutors and students was interviewed about prelims in general and essays in particular. The working party also issued a questionnaire and 'essay marking sheet' to second-year tutors. They were asked to mark the first essay they received from each student in a particular month against the criteria set out on the sheet. They were also asked to answer a number of questions regarding their practice of setting, marking and giving feedback on essays. This exercise provided a considerable amount of data. A statistical analysis was also carried out to ascertain which students, taking which major subjects, chose which prelims. Finally, all departmental documents concerning prelims were analysed and a brief history was written as part of the final report. All of these tasks, with the exception of the interviewing, were carried out by the departmental members of the working party.

The final report contained a series of recommendations concerning the future organization of prelims, steps which might be taken to identify and help weaker students, and ways of improving the essay setting, writing and marking process. The report was submitted to all members of the department and later discussed at a full meeting of faculty. Most of the recommendations were accepted and those which were not are to be looked at again in the light of a major policy decision in connection with a related manner, which is to be made in the near future.

These examples provide some idea of the kind of problems involved and the way in which they are studied, but the questions remain — how are the studies initiated and why does this mode of working seem to be acceptable to faculty? The origins of the approach may throw some light on this.

A series of events led to the setting up of the first joint working party. It began with a chance encounter over coffee between the programme organizer and a head of department: this led to some discussion about the work of the programme, and thence to an invitation to attend a faculty meeting during which the problem of tutorials was to be discussed. This meeting in turn gave rise to a decision by the department to set up a working party and an invitation to programme members to be part of the team.

There appears to be, in all this, a fortuitous element, but as subsequent working parties came into being on similar lines, the pattern of events began to suggest something more than mere chance. In retrospect, it seems that the department concerned was probably reacting to what it saw as a problem situation in a familiar way. Looking back at previous developments in this department, it is clear that the working party approach (drawing members from the different subject interests within the department) was an accepted mode of operation. The only change — an apparently minor one — was the inclusion of outsiders. Other departments have been less familiar with the working party approach, but whenever it has been suggested by a member of the programme it has generally been acknowledged as 'the right way to tackle the problem'.

Why should it be the 'right way'? Why should it be so generally acceptable to academics? The approach seems compatible with a culture which stresses the autonomy of individuals and departments, an organizational form which comprises subject-based departments committed to research in specific discipline areas, a decision-making structure in which debate and dissent are encouraged, and the existence of a discreet and informal power network largely controlled by heads of departments.

From this it might be deduced that the approach should, if it is to be successful, concern itself with the following: the specific needs of a particular department; the provision of opportunities for consultation and discussion with all those likely to be affected; the use of the familiar committee structure for debate; the minimization of any shift of resources and energy from research; and the acquisition of the support of influential heads of department likely to be affected by the change.

An organization which values highly the principle of autonomy will not only seek to maintain freedom in decision making but will also expect those responsible for decisions to exercise control over their subsequent implementation. Any attempt by outsiders to influence insiders must therefore accord with this principle to the extent of enabling those concerned to choose how best to put into effect any investigation which might result in change. In practice, this means encouraging active participation in the planning and implementation of the exercise by members of the academic department concerned and indicating, clearly, that they will be in a position to exercise day-by-day control over the course of events, directing and, if necessary, limiting the resources which they provide. It also means ensuring the opportunity for anyone in the department to receive information and to make their views known at any time, the use of a methodology which is either familiar or at least acceptable to the department, and regular communication with, and continuing support from, the department head.

When translated into practice these factors suggest a set of operating conditions. Those most frequently adopted at Sussex (which make no claim to being either universally necessary or sufficient) indicate the general flavour of the approach.

1. A problem or need is identified following discussion between a member of the department and a member of the Teaching and Learning Support Programme.
2. The support of the head of department is sought by the programme organizer.
3. The matter is discussed by the departmental group (usually in committee), resulting in an agreement to initiate a study.
4. A working party is set up comprising representatives of interest groups within the department together with members of the programme. A member of the department is usually appointed as chairman of the working party.
5. The working party may be instructed to report back to the

departmental group with the results of the investigation, and with recommendations for action, before a specified date.

6 The departmental group is guaranteed, through an appropriate committee, the final say over which, if any, recommendations should be implemented.

7 The working party determines its own methodology. This normally involves interviews with a wide range of interested parties and in some instances the use of questionnaires. It has been found that science or engineering departments generally seek statistical evidence in support of findings.

8 Faculty interviews are usually conducted by members of the TLSP but sometimes also involve departmental members as interviewers.

9 The working party meeets regularly (perhaps every two weeks) to consider evidence, review progress, discuss issues arising and decide what further action needs to be taken.

10 The bulk of student interviews, the preparation of a draft questionnaire, the analysis of data and the preparation of draft reports are carried out by the programme members. This is a crucial condition which allows professional expertise to be contributed, but at the same time enables departmental faculty to remain involved without being too heavily committed.

11 The final decisions on questionnaire details, statistical analysis, the conclusions to be drawn from them, and the wording of reports remain the prerogative of the working party and its departmental chairman.

At various stages members of the department have the opportunity to be consulted, to put forward their views privately or in committee, to receive up-to-date information on the study, and throughout to be represented by departmental working party members. The control of the working party and of the study remains at all times with the departmental members.

Although this approach has helped to examine some curricular problems and to suggest ways of overcoming them, its importance in terms of educational change may well be equalled by the benefits stemming from the process itself.

During the life of a working party a number of events and processes take place which are not always directly related to the problem as originally identified.

First, the regular meetings of the working group usually give rise to intensive discussion. The mixed backgrounds of the group members help to ensure that opposing points of view are aired and hitherto accepted assumptions are examined, often on topics extending well beyond the original brief. Experience suggests that these meetings, in providing lively debate on educational issues, are a valuable form of staff development.

Secondly, interviews extend the debate beyond the confines of the working party: this often seems to create a greater sense of participation and

involvement in the study. The discussion encourages interviewees to express their views and attitudes on topics which otherwise would seldom be examined in any detail.

Thirdly, the necessity to produce a report acceptable to a working party, which not only takes into account various shades of opinion but is also likely to influence and impress a larger group of faculty and students, creates a sense of commitment which goes far beyond that normally generated by either committee work or seminars on teaching topics.

The end result is usually a greater understanding by those concerned of the problem and its ramifications, together with an insight into (and sometimes a greater sympathy with) the views of those who hold a different viewpoint on the topics in question, not least students.

Turning next to consider the approach per se, it can perhaps best be evaluated in terms of its success in identifying and dealing with problems. Problem identification is usually only the first, tentative element in a longer process. Eraut (1975) suggests the following stages: problem awareness, diagnosis (gathering information), study (searching for methods of tackling the problem), attack, and evaluation.

The strategy previously outlined appears to confront only the first three of these stages — awareness, diagnosis and study — and to stop short of the fourth and fifth — attack and evaluation. It is indeed the case that the requirements earlier specified, of what should emerge from the working party's endeavours, is a closely argued case, indicating the various standpoints, setting out the evidence collected and using this to explore alternatives and suggest possibilities. Any action beyond this stage is a matter for the department itself to decide.

The strategy, however, has the capacity to detect at a fairly early stage the strength of support for, or opposition to, any proposals, to predict areas of conflict, and to provide evidence to underpin recommendations in such areas. The report should contain few surprises by the time it reaches members of the department concerned. The next stage is familiar — a committee meeting which may be routine or may be specially called to discuss the findings. If decisions are taken they will follow the normal pattern of such meetings. Further work may be deemed necessary (for example, a more detailed analysis of the resource implications of a particular recommendation may be called for); or the scope of the change may be reduced (for instance, by modifying the recommendations, limiting them to one course, or restricting the period to an experimental one year or one term). The eventual outcome may not be the same as that proposed. At worst, there may be no immediate and visible change. Even so the department will be better informed on a particular topic and this improved understanding is likely to manifest itself in future activities and discussions.

The decisions which are taken will not be free of political influence, but they will at least be based upon the participation of a larger group of people than usual and will be guided by more information than is generally

available. Many of the changes eventually made will have been the result of compromise and bargaining: but this is, of course, consonant with the normal procedures adopted in the institution. The working party, like any other group engaging in the process of academic politics, will be aware of the need to compromise and will take this into account in preparing its position.

This approach, although derived pragmatically, bears some resemblance to ideas suggested in the literature on innovation. Perhaps the most striking similarity is to be found in the work of Watson (1969). He suggests that resistance to change will be lessened if adopters feel the project is their own, the project has the support of top officials in the system, the participants see the change as reducing rather than increasing their burdens, the project accords with the acknowledged values and ideals of the adopters, the project offers a new experience which is of interest, security and autonomy are not threatened, participants have joined in diagnostic efforts leading to agreement on the basic problem, the project is adopted by consensual group decision, proponents are able to empathize with opponents, provision is made for regular feedback to avoid misunderstandings, trust and confidence can be built up, the project is kept open to revision and reconsideration as it progresses.

The approach adopted at Sussex, which has been used in connection with several different kinds of study; seems to fulfil most of the above conditions. It has, on each occasion, evoked a positive response from those to whom it has been proposed. Faculty who become involved do so knowing that it will take some of their time but that this will be limited both in amount and in duration: they will be committed to an extent which will not encroach upon their other work, particularly not their research. Their motivation for involvement normally reflects an earlier interest and concern. They may for some time have considered the problem to be in need of investigation, but not previously as capable of being tackled within the existing time and resource constraints.

# 8

# DIPLOMACY AND RADICAL CHANGE

The problem of rethinking educational change has, here, been approached from the perspective of an educational adviser charged with responsibility for bringing about change within one or more educational institutions. Importantly, outsiders, although sometimes separated physically, organizationally or socially from insiders, remain part of an overall system — a relatively stable educational culture. They are concerned with change but not radical change: they do not seek to overturn the system of which they are a part. The examples and case studies cited in the previous two chapters are, without exception, associated with paradigms of regulation. Change, where it is successfully introduced, may modify ideas, attitudes or practices within an institution or deparment but, essentially, it preserves the dominant features of the existing culture. This approach to change is clearly open to criticism. It is conservative in intent. It stays within the bounds created by the prevailing values and procedures of the institution concerned and will normally fail to confront them when perhaps they should be challenged.

This state of affairs would probably be acknowledged by an adviser, but he would also point out that as he is appointed by, and responsible to, key elements within the system he is hardly in a position to launch a direct attack upon the institution which so employs him. Any such attempt would be quickly and effectively dealt with.

But the critics of regulation and diplomacy would argue that the changes which occur as a result of this approach do not go far enough; essential and meaningful changes can only be brought about by radically altering the system itself. Such challenges to the status quo are generally launched from positions associated with the radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigms. The effectiveness, or otherwise, of such attacks are worth considering in the present context. How do they normally manifest themselves and what changes have occured as a result?

Change, from the radical humanist perspective, involves re-education. The values and beliefs which stem from this paradigm provide, for the individual, an alternative view of existence and of the meaning of life. They invert fundamental assumptions relating to objectivity and order found in the functionalist paradigm. Individuals who adopt them are encouraged to find, in themselves, a more authentic, autonomous self and to seek ways of living which transcend the normal constraints of everyday life. To accept such values is to place the needs and development of the individual unequivocably above those of the organization. This is an ideology which has found a great

deal of sympathy amongst students and these students have, in accordance with their beliefs, protested against the seeming inhumaneness of established institutions.

An example of this form of protest occurred in the USA. In 1970, following disturbances in many universities the President set up a 'Commission on Campus Unrest' composed of politicians, academics, and business, professional and lay members. The report (Scranton 1970) refers to a 'counter culture' which:

> '. . . took its bearings from the notion of the autonomous, self-determining individual whose goal was to live with "authenticity" or in harmony with his inner penchants and interests. It also found its identity in a rejection of the work ethic, motivation, and conventional social norms and practices. Indeed, it rejected all institutional discipline externally imposed upon the individual, and set it at odds with much in American society.' (p.62)

The disturbances and confrontations which occurred in the wake of this 'counter-culture' caused considerable concern. According to Scranton: 'The crisis . . . has no parallel in the history of the nation'.

But what major organizational changes occurred as a result? Students in America, and elsewhere where similar protests took place, have sometimes obtained the right to a greater say in the affairs of their colleges. They were accorded representation on most policy and decision-making bodies. They added an extra voice to the already complex formal politics of their institutions and they were able to place on record views derived from the standpoint of the 'counter-culture'. But such is the culture of most organizations in higher education that new voices and alternative perspectives offer no real threat: the forums of debate are designed to deal with a multiplicity of views. Exchanges may have become longer and more complex as a result but policy is still made and decisions are still taken much in the same way — through informal or semi-formal channels which have emerged, over time, to enable collegial organizations to survive and to act. Through a process of absorption most organizations have been able to incoprorate new positions and radical stances and remain, in essence, virtually unchanged.

In addition, the attack from a radical humanist standpoint is, in the long term, potentially self-defeating. Not only do individual students move on physically as they complete their studies, they also move on intellectually and emotionally in their search for autonomy and authenticity. Further, the 'duplicity' of higher education establishments is something to be exposed and transcended: to fight it on 'their' terms is to forsake the radical viewpoint and to become tarnished with the same brush. Cults, societies and movements grow but, almost as rapidly, change and disband as their members follow their own paths to greater self-enlightment. The attack has sometimes led to a rethinking of educational aims and in some countries to the setting up of 'experimental' colleges, where the values of the counter-culture can be more

readily and openly expressed, but seldom has it resulted in major changes to the established and traditional institutions.

The values of radical structuralism are more directly concerned with dismantling and restructuring the system as part of the process of political revolution. Radical change is the ultimate goal and the means are less important. The revolution is normally carried out in the name of those who, in one way or another, feel themselves to be subjugated, exploited or unrecognized. For this group of outsiders the only way to change power is to gain power and the methods used range from political activity of a traditional and accepted kind to direct and sometimes violent confrontation. Tactics involving peaceful protest, such as demonstration, passive resistance and mass lobbying, have be used, and violence, including the forcible occupation of premises and the holding of hostages, has sometimes been resorted to. Once again, however, the institutions under attack have proved themselves able to withstand and absorb the onslaught. Greater representation has been granted to students on various committees and their viewpoint has been heard along with many others. The presence on campus of groups with views opposed to the prevailing culture of the organization has led to more political activity and more protest and controversy over a wider range of issues. But it has also caused non-radical members of the organization to learn new strategies: they have had to become familiar with the tactics of confrontation, of creating and maintaining an appropriate public image, and of using, in different ways, the political channels of negotiation and bargaining open to them.

It has also been claimed by some that there is a concerted and deliberate attack from the political left upon the very foundations of higher education. Gould (1977), for instance, reports on the findings of a study group of the Institute of Conflict Studies in which it is alleged that some university departments 'have fallen squarely into radical Marxist hands'. It is maintained that extremists have formed a subversive network or bridgehead within various institutions in higher education from which to attack the basic values upon which the pluralist society of the United Kingdom rests: sociology and philosophy departments have been used as a base, but the most extreme infiltration has been into social work and teacher education.

But overall, despite the sometimes angry and violent scences, the publicity given to any event involving protest or demonstration, and the claims and counter-claims about infiltration from the left, it is difficult to point to any major changes in institutions which have been attacked in this way. Most organizations in higher education seem capable of absorbing new ideas and values to an infinite degree without changing their basic cultural form. Their business is dealing with new knowledge, and the structures and values which have evolved to make this possible have resulted in a great deal of flexibility.

But the fact that radical views and actions have failed to make a major impact upon the system does not mean that, as potential agents for change,

they should be ignored. They clearly represent points of view which do not accord with the dominant and prevailing values of their culture and as such they will put pressure on the sytem. From time to time this pressure will increase, as illustrated by the activities of the student counter-culture in the United States in the late 1960s, and will create disturbances of sufficient magnitude to cause members of the institutions concerned to re-consider their values, organizational structures and modes of operating. However, to use an analogy, the willow will bend, the storm will pass and the branch will return to its former position with no more than a few scars and minus a little foliage.

But during the storm, and in the process of bending — Berg and Östergren (1977) refer to the process as 'unfreezing' — there is a temporary instability. Institutionalized procedures and their supporting values, previously taken for granted, are questioned, and alternatives are proposed and debated. For a time, during this period, the way for change is open. But the outcomes are generally disappointing, particularly for those who exerted the pressure in the first place. The reason for this is the duress which generally accompanies the process. Battle lines are drawn and the opposing factions approach the negotiations from totally different value positions. The changes envisaged by one side are, almost, beyond the comprehension of the other . Those representing the status quo are thrown on to the defensive and employ every possible device to defeat the intruders. The result is generally a victory for the power holders — those who occupy the ground and have their roots firmly implanted — or a compromise which is more a matter of face saving than real change.

Diplomatic initiatives are feasible and important in these circumstances. Diplomacy, in the sense in which it is used here, implies a search for common ground and an attempt to match value positions. In the turbulance brought about by radical threats, opportunities are likely to present themselves to the outsiders to join in the questioning and debate. The adviser may thus be able to offer 'the search for common ground', as opposed to the more usual 'negotiation from strength', as a feasible strategic alternative. There can be no pretence that this will satisfy those who seek radical change — for the outsider will be regarded as part of the establishment — but what might be achieved is a more open and honest appraisal of the status quo carried out in a more rational, less defensive and less emotive atmosphere. The outsider may thus be able to use radical movements to help bring about important and needed, but less radical, change — a strategy not without its parallels in international diplomacy.

The essential features of the diplomatic approach, as previously described, still apply in this situation. The approach assumes that the outsiders have considered, in depth, their own position vis-à-vis educational change, have studied and understood the essential values which underpin the culture towards which the change is directed, and have sought means whereby the host culture might consider and eventually accept the proposed

change as an integral part of its own development. There are, however, added dimensions when radical pressures are applied at the same time. The diplomat must also understand the value position which supports the radical movement. The model suggested by Burrell and Morgan (1978), described in Chapter 5, provides a conceptual framework from which to approach this understanding. Furthermore, where radical threats to the status quo are involved, the insiders must be dissuaded from adopting an entirely defensive attitude. They will be restrained from doing so only if they feel relatively secure in the control which they exercise over the process of change. This reiterates an underlying tenet of the diplomatic approach: planned change, of a meaningful and lasting kind, is most likely to occur if it is introduced under the control of the host culture. This tenet formed the basis of the strategy described in Chapter 7. Revolutionary change is not ruled out in considering the broad sweep of educational change — it remains always an important alternative — but in practice, when radical pressures have been applied to institutions in higher education they have generally made neither a great nor a lasting impression.

## FINANCIAL CORROSION: THE ULTIMATE WEAPON?

Mention must now be made of another major source of pressure which can be brought to bear in order to bring about change. This involves financial control over the system. If a government seeks progressively to reduce the budget of an institution this will inevitably bring about change. At first it may only be marginal but eventually, if sufficient financial pressure is applied, major changes will be necessary if the institution is to survive. Exactly how this pressure might affect separate institutions, departments and individuals and what procedures organizations might evolve to deal with enforced budgetary cuts is a matter for conjecture. Pro-rata cuts 'across the academic board' is one possibility; another is for institutions to look closely at their existing academic and administrative arrangements with a view to adapting them to the new situation. The latter alternative seems to offer a better solution but raises the problem whether an institution, built upon the principle of individual and departmental autonomy and geared towards the expectancy of continuing growth, can turn inwards and impose economies upon itself.

At the University of Sussex a specially formed Group to Review Income and Plan Expenditure (which has its equivalent in many institutions in higher education at the present time) has released a report suggesting how the university might make sufficient savings to survive what amounts to a budget cut of about 20 per cent over a three-year period. Amongst other measures including a reduction in the level of academic and other staffing and sweeping changes in the availability of various services and provisions such as the library and general welfare services, it recommends the abolition of the Teaching and Learning Support Programme referred to in Chapter 7. Whether this will occur, and the way in which decisions for preserving some

features of university life whilst discarding others will eventually be made, remains to be seen, but what is becoming clear is that to meet the impending crisis — which some claim could result in bankruptcy within two years — the decision-making process and the culture of the university are beginning to change quite radically. The changes taking place can be analysed in the light of some of the ideas and concepts discussed earlier.

A helpful starting point is the paper by Noble and Pym (1970) — 'Collegial authority and the receding locus of power' — which was summarized briefly in Chapter 7. The authors describe the collegial system as one which encourages debate and dissent on all issues affecting the life of the university community. To support and enhance collegiality in a large, complex organization such as a university a committee structure has evolved which ensures that important matters are exposed to the light of critical scrutiny. The management of the organization is sustained and directed by 'a generally shared commitment to the value of self-government' and is carried out 'not by individuals but by committees'. The decision-making process which takes place within these committees is, however:

> 'not merely a technical matter, a matter of considering expert advice, weighing alternatives, calculating costs and benefits and striking a balance, but of finding room to pursue a project hemmed in by decisions already taken elsewhere, not always with adequate consideration, or by others yet to be taken, or avoiding probable stumbling blocks, and even of neutralizing potential competitors seeking to influence or take the decision themselves.' (p.437)

The authors refer to a Kafkasque experience in so far as the harder one looks the more the real locus of power recedes. Lower-level committees argue that they can only make recommendations, whereas in higher-level committees a feeling pervades that decisions have already been taken elsewhere. Such a system is clearly inefficient by all rational criteria. It is slow, cumbersome, uncertain as to direction and likely to produce inappropriate, compromise responses. Noble and Pym suggest that in order to meet the demands of the outside world a more rapid and sensitive decision-making process is needed and another system has had to be interposed. This must not, however, conflict openly with a generally supported ideological commitment to collegiality and it must operate effectively within norms of the prevailing culture. The solution found in the university sector generally involves a great deal of trust and tact. Power is, in effect, ceded to a small group of individuals (often, but not necessarily departmental heads) who, because of membership and detailed knowledge of the affairs of a number of interdependent committees, are able to influence decisions in the key debating forums. In other words collegiality reigns but real power can be exercised where most needed by a small 'court of nobles' operating in the 'shadow of the throne'. In normal times this system operates reasonably well — the 'nobles' use their power circumspectly and effectively, generally deferring to the 'organizational monarch' from whence their influence

derives. History has few 'palace revolutions' to reveal: power is generally felt to be shared to mutual benefit.

But circumstances have now presented a new challenge to this arrangement. The demands made upon the system are of crisis proportions. The government clearly has considerable power; it can act with speed and appears skilled in the use of tactics which cause the maximum uncertainty and confusion. The 'old guard' at the 'collegial palace' are not equipped to deal with this kind of threat.

Compromise, obscurity and trust are no longer satisfactory bases for sharing decision-making power; instead, prompt, ruthless, system-preserving action is called for if vestiges of the cultural inheritance are to survive. At least this is the interpretation placed upon the situation by the 'new guard' — the 'revolutionary hawks' as it were. For them, action, not debate, is necessary. 'There is no point in rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic' — might be their motto.

That the locus of power has shifted in the present circumstances is beyond doubt, but where is the new locus and why has the change happened? The answer may be suggested in a study of power by Hickson et al. (1973). They maintain that most organizations can be regarded as systems facing uncertainty and struggling to cope with it. Units or groups are created within such organizations especially to deal with recognized areas of uncertainty (in an industrial situation, for instance, these areas might be variable demand for products or discontinuities in the supply of essential raw materials) whilst other parts of the organization continue to operate in conditions approaching near certainty. Those parts of the organization which have the task of coping with uncertainty, and which cope with it well, will achieve considerable power over the rest.

Furthermore, if the unit or group which acquires this power is performing tasks which are central to the functioning of the organization, and if it is difficult to find a substitute for it, its power will be further increased and consolidated.

Uncertainty is defined as 'a lack of information about future events, so that alternatives and their outcomes are unpredictable.' This definition fits well with the situation which now faces most institutions in higher education. In fact it might be argued that uncertainty has never been higher and that if a group within a university did not exist to deal with such a crisis then one would have to be created. Whether or not such groups will cope in the present situation remains to be seen but what they can almost certainly claim is high centrality and low substitutability.

The most important tasks which universities have to perform in present circumstances relate to acquisition and distribution of resources, achievement of student targets, balancing of income and expenditure, and planning and implementing of reductions in expenditure in order to meet forecast deficits. All of these have now to be undertaken in the face of considerable uncertainty compared with a few years ago. It is noteworthy that these tasks

are not directly concerned with such matters as curriculum change, support services, staff development, community welfare, etc. except in so far as it is necessary to assess how dispensable they are.

In the circumstances the identity of the group of people who will move into this central position of power is not hard to predict. They are those who have knowledge and experience of dealing with key issues in normal or semi-normal times, who know what makes for certainty and uncertainty and can assess what the implications are for the organization as a whole. Those who face and have faced these sources of uncertainty in the past will have this power thrust upon them. The vice-chancellor, for instance, as chief representative of the university on outside bodies, and having formal and informal contacts with important information-acquiring groups such as the University Grants Committee and the Committee of Principals and Vice-Chancellors, must be chief amongst these. His power will increase accordingly and so also, by the same token, should the power attached to the role of chairman of council. But planning and finance officers and those who control student admissions must also gain an increased share of power, both through their access to vital information and their past experience of coping with fluctuations and unpredictable situations. Others holding positions of high responsibility in the academic community may be seconded to the controlling group, but even so the group will not be large: by the nature of its task it cannot afford to be. In general there will be a tendency for the locus of power to shift away from academics and towards administrators.

The new group will tend to impress and to influence other bodies to which the university is ultimately accountable (such as council and court) by its ability to take difficult decisions even though such decisions may seem to bring it into conflict with the majority of the organization's members. By contrast, the majority, still seeking to operate by collegial norms, will appear to be in a state of confusion and disarray and in need of firm leadership. The new power group will thus be convinced that their task is to lead. They may not have been a group, in the usual sense of the term, beforehand but the need for rapid action to ensure the system's survival will provide the bond which adds a certain accord and unanimity to unpleasant decisions and actions. As a result the receding locus of power recedes no longer; the real locus is brought to the foreground and is defended by many as the only way out of the abyss. Thus the culture has changed in the face of powerful coercion from outside, generated, ironically, from the right of the political spectrum. Collegiality, it seems, cannot survive and a new culture begins to emerge.

The new culture might be compared with those suggested by Handy (1976) which were outlined briefly in Chapter 4. Universities, in so far as they can be categorized within this framework, have evolved as mixed cultures which have achieved a sensitive balance between different styles of organization. The 'task culture' has tended to dominate as far as academic work is concerned.

According to Handy this culture:

'. . . seeks to bring together the appropriate resources, the right people at the right level of organisation and to let them get on with it. Influence is based more on expert than on position power, although these sources have their effect. Influence is also more widely dispersed than in other cultures, and each individual tends to think he has more of it.' (p.182)

Counterbalancing this, however, are other organizational styles. The role culture which is associated with bureaucracy is apparent where hierarchies of control have emerged either within the academic system or as an essential feature of the administration. The influence of a person culture can also be seen through the action of members who behave as though the organization exists 'to serve and assist individuals within it'. Finally, and importantly, the existence of a subtly controlled power culture is suggested by the work of Noble and Pym discussed earlier.

But now this balance has been disturbed. Elements of the person culture seem likely to disappear and the influence of the task culture must surely be diminished. A power culture, assisted by a supporting role culture, already seems to be emerging.

In a power culture, according to Handy:

'Control is exercised by the centre largely through the selection of key individuals, by occasional forays from the centre or summonses to the centre. It is a political organisation in that decisions are taken very largely on the outcomes of a balance of influence rather than on procedural or purely logical grounds.' (p.178)

An essential requisite in the present circumstances is that those at the centre 'have the ability to move quickly and can react well to threat or danger.' Their power is not the collegially exercised and controlled power described by Noble and Pym, rather it is the power of single-minded entrepreneurs as described by Handy.

Can diplomacy, as a way of bringing about change, continue to exist in these circumstances and does it have a role to play? The answer to the first part of the question depends upon many factors, including how quickly events occur, how deeply the crisis affects each institution, the extent to which the balance of power shifts decision making away from its traditional collegial base, and, finally, the degree of support which exists for the diplomatic approach. The answer must therefore remain uncertain.

But the second part of the question can be answered with more certainty: diplomacy does have a role to play in the new situation. Although the crisis primarily affects each institution as a whole it is at the departmental level that the new set of problems has to be faced and the actual savings made. It is also at this level that diplomacy operates more effectively.

A group of outsiders, in sympathy with this approach, could, along with departmental members, help in the identification of problems and the search for solutions but, as always, control over the process would remain with the

insiders and be compatible with their normal way of doing things. The strategy could offer a means for studying many of the problems involved, including the redeployment of resources, necessary organizational change, and the use of alternative teaching and learning methods. The strength of the approach lies in its ability to identify and formulate problems and to seek out a range of possible alternatives prior to discussion and decision making. The search for information and evidence will generally involve those most likely to be affected by the change and it is often these people who are most likely to offer valuable ideas and suggestions.

The strength of support or opposition to any particular solution can also be estimated and alternatives can be presented in such a way as to ensure a broad scanning of possibilities. The approach will not, of course, make difficult dicisions any easier but it will ensure a much better-informed debate. The alternatives to this are ad hoc and unplanned change largely imposed from the outside and these are so alien to the traditional culture that their use is bound to be unpalatable. The case for diplomacy is, therefore, a strong one, which should be made not solely by outsiders to insiders but by all of those involved in higher education and concerned to promote the kind of planned change which preserves the essential cultural values of academia.

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INDEX


Action frame of reference 55, 56, 81
Agricultural botany paradigm 56
Analysis from the top 35
Assessment 86-87
Association of University Teachers 14

Bailey, F. 83
Baker, E.J. 50
Baldridge, J.V. 82
Ball, S.J. 40
Banbrough, R. 21
Becher, R.A. 19, 38, 40, 43
Benton, T. 46
Berg, B. 66, 96
Berger, P.L. 48, 55
Berman, P. 28
Bernstein, R.J. 46
Black, P. 45, 76
Blaug, M. 51
Bligh, D. 20, 41
Brunel University Bulletin 64
Bucher, R. 43
Burkhead, J. 51
Burns, T. 33
Burrell, G. 46, 97

Centre for Educational Technology 80
Chairman of Council 100
Change *see* Strategies for change
Chin, R. 23
Cohen, M.D. 83
Collaborative problem solving 18
*see also* Participative problem solving
Colleges of Education Learning Project 71-75
Collegiality 15, 17, 98
Collier, K.G. 72
Colliere 29
Commission on Campus Unrest 94
Computer assisted learning 51
Comte, Auguste 50
Council for Educational Technology 71
Convergent thinkers 37
Coordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers 13
Cost benefit analysis 51
Cost effectiveness analysis 51
Countesthorpe College 59
Critical theory 46
Crouch, C. 61
Culture 30, 63
— counter- 94
— in schools 40, 69
— organizational 32-34, 100-101
— sub- 42-43
— subject disciplines 36-44
— the two 36-37
Curriculum development 6, 11, 20, 50
— Masters degree in 81

Dahrendorf, R. 46, 48
Day, R. and J. 55
Departments 19
DES 51
Deschooling 61
Determinism 47

Dewey, J. 54
Diffusion strategy 24, 64-68
Diplomacy 1, 12, 29, 96, 101
— diplomat 1, 29
— and foreign policy 28
Divergent thinkers 37
Dressel, P.L. 54
Durkheim, Emile 50

Education
— progressive 54
— research 19
— technology 6, 14, 19, 23, 50, 51, 78, 80
Efficiency 5, 16
Elliott, J. 56
Empirical/rational strategy 23, 36
Empirical theory 46
Epistemological debate 47
Eraut, M. 91
Evaluation 56, 91
Exchange of notes 5-11
Existentialism 57
Expenditure 16

Finance 97
Free schools 59
Friere, P. 58
Functionalist paradigm 46, 49, 50-53, 72

Gerlach, V.S. 51
Gintis, H. 60
Goffman, I. 55
Gouldner, R.W. 46
Gould, J. 95
Gouldstein, J. 48
Goodman, P. 58
Greenaway, H. and Harding, A. 13
Group for Research into Higher Education *see* Nuffield Foundation
Group to Review Income and Plan Expenditure 97

Halsey, A.H. 15, 83
Hamilton, D. 56
Handy, C. 31, 82, 100
Hansen, W.L. 51
Harrison, R. 30
Havelock, R.G. 24, 71, 75
Head of Department 19, 90
Hewton, E. 15, 67
Hickson, D.J. 99
Higher Education Learning Project (Physics) 45, 75-77
Hirst, P. 50
Holt, J. 58
Hooper, R. 51
Host culture 1, 82
Huberman, A.M. 24, 71, 75
Hudson, L. 37, 39, 43
Humanities project 68-71
Husserl, Edmund 53

Idealism 48
Illich, I. 58, 61
Illuminative approach 57
Impact and take-up project 71
Independent learning 54-55, 58
Input-output analysis 51
Insider(s) 4, 27, 34-44, 46
Interdisciplinarity 39
Interpretive paradigm 46, 49, 53-57, 76

Jenkins, D. 51
Jones, J. 55

Kahn, R.L. 50
Kant, Emmanuel 53
Katz, D. 50
Keinzle, H.J. 48
Keller, F.S. 51
Kohl, H. 58
Kozol, J. 58
Kuhn, T.S. 46

Layard, L. 51
Lecturer(s) 2, 19, 67

Linguistic analysis 46
Lockwood, D. 48
Loss adjusting 2
Luckman, T. 48, 55
Macdonald, B. 56
Managed change *see* Planned change
Manipulative strategy 24
March, J.G. 83
Marx, K. 60
Matheson, C. 13
McIntyre, D. 19
Methodological debate 47
Morgan, G. 46, 97
Mutual adaptation 28

National Council for Educational Technology *see* Council
National Foundation for Educational Research 13, 51
National Union of Students 13
Negotiated order 55
Negotiating position 2
Neill, A.S. 58
Network 67
Neville, C. 73
Nicolson, H. 4, 29
Noble, T. 82, 98
Normative/re-educative strategy 23, 36
North East London Polytechnic 54
Nuffield Foundation 14
— Group for Research into Higher Education 14, 15, 41, 54, 66-68
— Higher Education Learning Project (Physics) 45, 75-77

Oatey, M. 51
Objectives 5, 19, 50, 51
Objectivity 47
Ogborn, J. 45, 76
Ontological debate 47
Open input strategy 24, 25
Organization(s)
— analysis 51
— cultures 32-34
— mechanistic and organismic 33
— style 30-31
— systems 50
Östergren, B. 65, 96
Output budgeting 51
Outsider(s) 4, 12, 15, 20, 36, 44, 63, 83, 85, 101
— position 46
— strategies 65-78

Paradigms 47-50 *see also* Functionalist, Interpretive, Radical humanist, Radical structuralist and Agricultural botany paradigms; *also* Kuhn, T.S.
Parlett, M. 56
Participative problem solving 24, 75-77, 85-92 *see also* Problem-solving strategy
— guidelines for 89
Paulston, R.G. 46
Pearson, L.B. 29
Percy, K. 54
Persona non grata 4
Person culture 33
Phenomenology 53
Planned linkage strategy 24, 71-75
Policy 26, 27
Popham, W.K. 50
Postman, N. 58
Power
— culture 35
—receding locus of 82, 99
— as a strategy 24, 25
— of outsider(s) 17, 25
Power/coercive strategy 23, 65-66
Problem-solving strategy 24, 75, 85-92
Productivity measurement 51
Promotion 18
Publications 18

Pym, B. 82, 98

Radical change 48, 93
Radical humanist paradigm 46, 49, 57-59, 93-95
Radical movements 94-95
Radical school reform 58, 60-62
Radical structuralist paradigm 46, 49, 95-96
Ramsden, P. 54
Receding locus of power 82
Re-educative strategy 68-71
Regulation 48
Reimer, E. 58
Research academic 5, 10, 15, 83
— and teaching 83
Research, development and diffusion strategy 24
Rice, A.K. 50, 51, 83
Role culture 32
Rudduck, J. 69

Sartre, Jean Paul 57
Schools Council 68, 71
Schubert's Unfinished Symphony 64
Schumaker, M. 56
Scranton, W.W. 94
Self-paced instruction 51
Selznick, P. 50
Silverman, D. 55
Singh, M. 21
Sloman, A. 39
Smith, L. 56
Snow, C.P. 36
Social engineering 24
Social interaction strategy 24
Social structure 55
Sociological positivism 48
Society for Research into Higher Education 14
Staff development 20, 41-42, 82
— in schools 70
Stalker, G.M. 33
Startup, R. 17
Strasser, H. 47
Strauss, A. 43, 55
Strategies for change 23, 24, 36, 45
— and policy 26-28
— used by outside organizations 65-78
Study skills 10
Subject disciplines 36-44
Subjectivity 47, 56
Summerhill School 58
Systems 50
— approach to education 50, 51

Task culture 32, 36
Teaching
— hours 8
— problems of 8-10
— proportion of time devoted to 15
— style 75
— tutorials 86-87
Teaching and learning committee 5, 7, 45
Teaching and learning support programme 79, 81
Technology *see* Education, technology
Technician Education Council 51
Thomson, M.M. 54
Tichy, N. 35
Times Higher Educational Supplement 20
Traditional-functionalist paradigm 50-53
Trow, M. 15, 83
Tyler, R.W. 51
Tylor 30

Uncertainty principle 76-77
University Authorities Panel 14
University Grants Committee 14, 80, 100
University of Lancaster 54
University newsletter 5, 7, 15

University of Sussex 79-91

Values 27, 45
Vice-chancellor 100
Voluntarism

Watson, G. 92
Watts, J. 59
Weber, Max 55
Weeks, D.R. 48
Weingarten, C. 58
Woodhall, M. 51

Zaltman, G. 24, 26

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